

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBYAN- TUNISIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS: A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

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Abstract

Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations take place in a context shaped by particular historical factors in the Maghreb over the past two centuries. Various elements and factors continue to define the limitations and opportunities present for regimes and governments to pursue hostile or negative policies concerning their immediate neighbours. The period between 1969 and 2010 provides a rich area for the exploration of inter-state relations between Libya and Tunisia during the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st century. Ideologies such as Arabism, socialism, Third Worldism, liberalism and nationalism, dominated the Cold War era, which saw two opposing camps: the capitalist West versus the communist East. Arab states were caught in the middle, and many identified with one side over the other, generating ideological rivalries in the Middle East and North Africa. The anti-imperialist sentiments dominating Arab regimes and their citizens led many statesmen and politicians to wage ideological struggles against their former colonial masters and even neighbouring states.

Post-independence Tunisia and Libya were involved in the rivalry that was clearly present during the 20th century between 'radical' and 'conservative' Arab regimes. A polarised ideological climate existed between Habib Bourguiba, Tunisia's first President, and Muammar Gaddafi, the young military officer who would later become the ruler of Libya, which created a hostile climate. The regimes of Bourguiba and Gaddafi adopted differing positions on their relations with other Arab states, Pan-Arabism and a narrowly defined Tunisian nationalism, and they clashed on many occasions. Ideology was a major factor contributing to the state of relations between Bourguiba and Gaddafi in the period between 1969 and 1987. Post-1987, Tunisia made a remarkable reversal under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had ousted Bourguiba from power, in the area of Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations. The years between 1987 and 2010 witnessed joint co-operation and policies between the regimes of Tunisia and Libya, principally in the area of the economy. Gaddafi and Ben Ali appear to have focused more on shared economic interests than on implementing a radical pan-Arabism or a conservative notion of Tunisian nationalism.

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INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial Maghreb is home to countries sharing many similarities but also differences. Populism in various forms has left its mark on the self-identity of the regimes in the region. Further, the relationship between ideology and inter-state relations has been particularly strong since the first years of independence. Libya, Tunisia and Algeria adopted the various ideologies which have informed their ties with their neighbours. The research I propose to undertake in this thesis occurs in a context characterised by many factors which influence, to varying degrees, the direction and nature of relations among states in the Maghreb. I am interested in examining Libyan-Tunisian inter-state relations between the years 1969 and 2010. The hypothesis that I propose to explore in this thesis directly relates the impact of ideology on these relations in that period. A decline in ideology after 1987 caused an improvement in the economic and political ties of Tunisia and Libya, with pragmatic and shared interests leading to joint policies. Religion, ideology, politics, economics, history and society are part of the broader context which is needed to explore and understand the ties between Tunisia and Libya during the Cold War and the rise of the USA as the sole superpower in the world.

Colonialism in the Maghreb was a violent experience, with resistance launched by Arab tribesmen and other social groups in both Tunisia and Libya. France and Italy challenged the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire and annexed its key provinces, thereby eroding its North African territories. French troops occupied Tunisia in 1881 and Italy began its conquest of Libya in 1911. While Tunisia was a relatively coherent political entity, Libya was divided according to the three provinces: Fezzan, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Informal links between tribesmen in these two colonies demonstrated the rejection of the legitimacy of borders which did not previously exist. Anti-colonial campaigns were born in Tunisia and Libya, led by the Constitutionalist Party and the Senoussiyya Sufi brotherhood, respectively.

The long struggle against colonialism finally witnessed the independence of Tunisia and Libya and the withdrawal of the colonial authorities. In Tunisia, Bourguiba and the Neo-Constitutionalist Party had negotiated the terms of independence with the French.

Muhammad Idris ibn Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Senoussi became King Idris I following years spent in exile in Egypt after agitating against Italian colonialism. The new regimes in Tunisia and Libya were generally conservative in their foreign policy. Further, Bourguiba and Idris had fostered friendly relations with the USA. The latter even invited the British and Americans to have military bases in his country. Post-1969, Libya would witness a transformation of this geopolitical alignment with the capitalist West, and a movement towards the socialist camp, led by the USSR on the world stage, and Nasserist Egypt in the Arab world.

The party-state emerged in the post-colonial era with no tolerance for opposition movements or parties. Although populism in the Arab world recognised the self-determination of the Arab masses, it did not trust them to run their own affairs. Democracy was rejected as a route for the empowerment of people. Instead, many authoritarian regimes adopted an agenda of nationalisation in countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. Although the 'conservative regimes' of the Arab Gulf escaped the pull of socialism, their rule was based on kinship ties or religion, with direct control of their economies. Tunisia had experimented with socialism briefly, and the state remained in control over major sectors of the economy, from banking to agriculture.

The role of Islam in Arab politics continues to be misunderstood by many. In the Cold War, Islam was employed by various regimes for radical and conservative objectives. Libya, under Gaddafi, transformed the Islamic ideology of the regime into a revolutionary appeal to rise against imperialism. This was in direct contrast to the conservatism of the Senoussiyya monarchy. In Egypt, Abdul Nasser had managed to bring the major religious institutions of the country, such as al-Azhar under the control of the state. Islam was effectively nationalised for social and political purposes. Bourguiba's Tunisia had also nationalised religion, but it was motivated by different objectives. A strict separation between religion and politics was forcefully implemented by Bourguiba, like his act of drinking water during the day during Ramadan.

The economies of former colonies in the Maghreb were dependent on Europe and other regions for their sources of revenue. Primary sector exports, such as oil and agricultural produce, were the primary areas of economic activity for Libya and Tunisia respectively, after independence. I mentioned, above, the socialist policies adopted in Tunisia and Libya in this period and how they reinforced the authoritarian character of these two regimes. The

collapse of the USSR speeded up the process of change from socialism to a regime-led neo-liberal agenda. Foreign direct investment became the dominant mechanism in the attempt to stimulate economic growth. From 2000, Libya witnessed Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi's project of 'Tomorrow's Libya', based on the rhetoric of political and economic reform. In both Ben Ali's Tunisia and Gaddafi's Libya, economic liberalisation was selective and according to the desires and benefits of the authoritarian regime in charge.

Importance of the Subject

The importance of the subject of Libyan-Tunisian relations is located in the effort to build bridges after decades of mutual antagonism. Between 1969 and 1987, Tunis and Tripoli were involved in a hostile rivalry that was influenced by ideological, personal and political factors. Arab unity was a major issue in disagreement in the Maghreb region, and Bourguiba fell out with Gaddafi over the integration of all Arab states into a single political union. Interestingly, Bourguiba and Gaddafi signed an agreement in 1974 to unite under one government, but that was quickly dissolved. The lowest point in Libyan-Tunisian relations came in the events following the Gafsa crisis, with Libya threatening to attack the country after a Libyan-backed uprising failed. Efforts to integrate states in the Maghreb were complicated by the hostile attitudes of the regimes towards each other. Morocco and Algeria had a longstanding dispute which spilled onto the thorny subject of the Western Sahara. Ideological disagreements divided Arab regimes into 'radical' and 'conservative' camps during the Cold War period. The significance of the research in this thesis is based on the factor of ideology that appears to have exerted a strong influence on Arab politics. Interestingly, the very ideology of unity that was adopted by Gaddafi seems to have contributed to a deterioration in unity with other Arab states. Tunisian nationalism, for Bourguiba, narrowed down the prospects of political and economic integration. From 1987, there was a move from political union based on the ideology of Arabism, to economic integration based on pragmatic interests, a shared neo-liberal agenda. A historical perspective looking at the colonial and post-colonial periods will be very useful to identify the context of the exploration of the bilateral relations between Libya and Tunisia. Further, the factors which pulled apart or pushed together these two countries can help shed light on other case studies involving Arab states that are cooperating in various areas.

Justification and Aims of the Research

There is an urgent need to fill a gap in the existing literature on the Maghreb in general, and on Libyan-Tunisian relations in particular. Topics such as European Union-Maghreb ties, Arab integration projects in the form of the Gulf Co-operation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union, and the lack of an initiative towards Arab unity, have been tackled in detail. The failure of pan-Arabism to unite the Arabs has been debated by Western scholars and Arab intellectuals. However, no attention has been paid to political and economic relations between Tunisia and Libya in the independence era. Although the Bourguiba and Gaddafi regimes were located in a context where Arabism was the dominant ideology, no in-depth studies exist on Libyan-Tunisian ties. I aim to fill the gap in the scholarship on the projects of integration among states in the Maghreb through the research I plan to undertake for my thesis. Further, the existing theories on integration and co-operation are unable to provide adequate explanations of Arab efforts to unite, their failures and successes, and the transformation of previously negative ties between Tunisia and Libya after 1987, when Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ousted Bourguiba after 31 years in power. Neo-functionalism, institutionalism and inter-governmentalism and the lack sensitivity to the particular historical, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of the Maghreb in a post-colonial context. I thus propose to use a grounded theory approach to generate a theory that is capable of exploring Libyan-Tunisian relations. Additionally, the formulation of categories of analysis and interpretation will help to identify the key aspects of the subject under investigation. The primary sources collected will inspire and inform these categories, and I aim to explore the hypothesis and answer the research questions in a dynamic process of research collection and analysis. My research will be characterised by two interdependent stages: data collection and subsequent analysis. I will collect primary sources in the form of interview answers and official government documents. Analysis of these sources will take place through a critical examination of language. A recurring pattern of words and phrases, as well the presence of similar or different terms, will be identified.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One

Chapter 1 of this thesis begins with a statement of the object of enquiry, providing some details on the scope of the research proposed in this thesis concerning the regimes which ruled Libya and Tunisia between 1969 and 2010. I will elaborate on the significance of this study in a regional context that lacks supra-national organisations which could foster Arab integration. I will outline the hypothesis and research questions at the heart of this thesis. The theoretical framework and methodology based on grounded theory, complemented by discourse analysis, is discussed and stated in clear terms in the final parts of the chapter.

Chapter Two

In Chapter 2 I review the relevant secondary sources on Libyan-Tunisian relations and on the Maghreb in general. Political scientists, anthropologists, economists and social scientists have studied the various aspects of this region of the Arab world. The prospect of engagement co-operation with the European Union is an area of academic interest among many other areas. Secondary sources have been divided into three categories in my review. The first part examines the literature on the Mediterranean and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Part two examines studies on Arab regional blocs and organisations. The third part looks at the scholarship on Arab states and their level of economic co-operation.

Chapter Three

Chapter 3 will examine how colonialism began in the Maghreb, with a particular focus on Libya and Tunisia and the era just after their independence in the 1950s. Five parts make up this chapter as I highlight the different stages of the largely informal relations binding the colonial subjects of French Tunisia and Italian Libya. Group solidarity appears to have united tribesmen from both these colonies. Resistance fighters, such as Khalifah Ben Asker and Mohammad Daghbaji, waged campaigns against the colonial occupation of their lands from both sides of the colonial Libyan-Tunisian border. The formulation of the idea of the Republic of North Africa by Young Tunisians expressed the sentiments of political union and self-determination. In the period of early independence, a republic had emerged in Tunisia under the leadership of Bourguiba, after he had abolished the monarchy, and Libya saw the adoption of the Senoussiyya monarchy.

Chapter Four

Chapter 4 highlights the political contexts of Libya and Tunisia in the period after independence, with emphasis on the factors of domestic politics, their economies and religion. Knowledge of these three areas will help to understand foreign policy behaviour. The emergence of authoritarianism had eliminated opposition to the regimes of Bourguiba, Ben Ali and Gaddafi in an effort to maintain their rule and to implement their political visions. Two dissimilar economic systems characterise these two countries, with Libya being dependent on oil, and the Tunisian economy being based on agriculture and tourism. Islam was used by Bourguiba, Ben Ali, King Idris I and Gaddafi in various ways to uphold secularisation, the -option of religion, conservatism and revolution, respectively.

Chapter Five

In Chapter 5 I will analyse the primary sources, mainly the interviews collected, motivated by the aim of finding out to what extent ideology dominated Libyan-Tunisian relations between 1969 and 1987. The Francophile Bourguiba, who sided with the capitalist West, was in direct opposition to the Arabism of Gaddafi, who backed the radical regimes of the Arab world. I will examine the sources of division which emerged, such as Bourguiba's controversial speech at Jericho in Palestine, the coup d'état against him in 1963, the Gafsa crisis, and I end with a discussion on the turning point in Libyan-Tunisian relations, with the new Ben Ali regime in control of Tunisia.

Chapter Six

Chapter 6 will examine the changed behaviour of the regimes in charge of Tunis and Tripoli after 1987. A new regime in Tunisia created a new opportunity for Gaddafi to foster closer relations with his neighbour. My discussion is divided into eight parts, with each part highlighting a specific aspect of Libyan-Tunisian relations. Differences in the economies and the past policies adopted in Tunisia and Libya will be examined. The other parts of the chapter focus on the stage of unorganised Libyan-Tunisian economic relations that led to the rise of a vibrant black market, known as 'the Tunisian Souk'; the implementation of the National Treatment Principle, seeking to harmonise the rules on Tunisian and Libyan goods; the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber's activities in the promotion of cross-border commercial opportunities; efforts to build a common and appropriate infrastructure for bilateral projects and the formation of mega projects; the existence of the private sector, the international embargo on Libya and its impact on the development of Libyan-Tunisian

economic links, and the lack of harmonisation in the banking and tourist sectors, accompanied by a climate of unpredictability.

Chapter Seven

Chapter 7 will examine Libyan-Tunisian relations through the formation of regional organisations, such as the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union. Increasing levels of cross-border trade between the two countries also took place. I will analyse official documents collected from state archives in order to identify the motivations underlying the improvement in Libyan-Tunisian relations from 1987 to 2010. I will also seek to explore how the decline in the ideology created a context that was favourable for the abandonment of old hostilities. There are five parts which make up this chapter, beginning with the Libyan-Tunisian effort to co-ordinate their relations through the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union, followed by an examination of joint commercial policies that were aimed at imposing tax exemptions on Tunisian and Libyan goods. The third part continued this examination, looking at the rise in the commercial exchange of these goods crossing the border. Part four focuses on the unsuccessful attempt at the bilateral construction of the Ras Ajdir customs post on the Libyan-Tunisian border. The fifth chapter examines the economic co-operation in the form of joint investments, whereby a number of actors co-ordinated their activities for this purpose.

Chapter Eight

Chapter 8 will continue the examination of Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations, focusing on specific projects. I will analyse official documents and agreements from state archives which were collected during my research. Joint committees were formed only for the purpose of driving bilateral relations. Three parts of this chapter examine the various dimensions of Libyan-Tunisian ties. I have divided these parts according to the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, and they are subdivided further into subsections. While Libya lacked an industrial sector, Bourguiba made the first moves to develop it with the long-term consequences of establishing a manufacturing base in Tunisia. Further, Tunisia's tourism sector benefited from Libyan oil money, which allowed the latter country to make substantial investments in hotels and resorts. The authoritarian regimes in Tunis and Tripoli played a major role in managing joint relations with state-owned companies that were taking the initiative.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis will reflect on the analyses from various chapters. A set of reflections in the form of a set of categories for analysis will generate a theory from the primary sources. Grounded theory will be one of the primary contributions that I seek to make through my research. Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations in the context of the dominance and of a subsequent decline in the ideology between 1969 and 2010, will benefit greatly from such an approach. The categories of analysis are international and regional factors, the durability of authoritarianism, the dynamics between the informal and formal spheres, and economic motivations. My research will also be reviewed according to its strengths and weaknesses. The final part of my conclusion will propose future areas of research based on the analysis and reflections contained in this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Introduction

North African states have been shaped by factors within and without the region. For the last two centuries, the impositions of the modern state and colonialism have often gone hand in hand to leave their mark on political institutions. Tunisia and Libya are two countries with a common legacy, but with different colonial and post-colonial repercussions. They also share an important border, that acts as a porous space for political, economic, cultural and social exchange. The fate of these two states was and is, to a certain extent, dependent on the other's internal stability and prosperity. During the twentieth century, the factor of ideology played a primary role in determining Libyan-Tunisian relations. However, the importance of ideology appears to have experienced a decline towards the end of the century. Elite-driven policies focusing on neo-liberal economic development replaced the grand narratives of Arabism or Socialism. This chapter outlines the object of inquiry and how research will be carried out in order to address the hypothesis and the key questions proposed in this thesis.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part states in explicit terms what the object of inquiry is. Both the period of examination and the key facets of the relations between Tunisia and Libya will be identified. Heads of state, such as Habib Bourguiba, Muammar Gaddafi and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, appear to wield a lot of influence in how their countries interact with each other. Changes in policies were usually introduced as a result of either the ousting of rulers who had been replaced by new individuals espousing opposing, if not contradictory, views or a reversal of political and economic policies by incumbent leaders.

The next part explores the significance of the study to be undertaken. Relations between Tunisia and Libya take place in a context without the existence of effective supra-national institutions. Apart from the League of Arab States and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), there is a lack of organisations that are formally dedicated to the unity of Arab states. Further, the Arab League and the AMU have proved to lack the political will or resources to push countries, notably Libya and Tunisia, towards integration.

Part three of this chapter contains the formulation of the hypothesis guiding the inquiry into Libyan-Tunisian relations. Pragmatic policies appear to characterise the relations between Tunisia and Libya from the early 1990s until 2010. Various contexts serve as important

points of reference from which to interpret the political changes in North Africa. The key questions concerning these relations are also asked and these are underpinned by an objective of focusing on the factors leading to the de-emphasis on ideology in the process of inter-state interactions accompanied by the increasing importance of economics led by a state-elite. In light of the proposed hypothesis and the questions to be posed in this thesis, I will apply discourse analysis to the data collected in my research.

Part four discusses the use of qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. These methods inform the way I approach the subject of the longstanding and contentious relations between Tunisia and Libya in a post-colonial environment. More importantly, I aim to use discourse analysis that is motivated by the aim to generate a theory that is able to explain Libyan-Tunisian relations based on the changing historical and collective nature of human agency.

Object of Inquiry: Scope of the Study

I propose to study Libyan-Tunisian relations from 1969 until 2010. The focus on this period is motivated by the sequence of events that is characterised both by efforts towards political union and heightened tensions between Tunisia and Libya. Despite the longevity of the reigns of Habib Bourguiba and Muammar Gaddafi, these two countries experienced a remarkable diversity of phases in inter-state relations. Bourguiba's ousting by Zine El Abidine Ben Ali also contributed to further changes, as Ben Ali ascended to the presidency fortified with his own ideas about Tunisia's place in the world. The factor of ideology appears in various guises alongside the impetus for greater political and economic co-operation on a pragmatic basis. In certain instances, the two converge.

Additionally, ideology seems to have dominated the politics of most Arab state elites and their populations in the second part of the twentieth century. From pan-Arabism to Third Worldism, the regional policies of Tunisia and Libya in North Africa were subject to various influences. Moves towards greater co-operation between Tunisia and Libya have occurred since the military coup of 1969 in Libya, which witnessed their short-lived union under the Islamic Arab Republic in 1974. However, crises were not absent between Libya and Tunisia. The Gafsa incident, reportedly involving the capture of the town by Libyan-trained Tunisians,

precipitated a severe deterioration in political and economic associations. Gaddafi's ideological beliefs, one may argue, served as the backdrop to the intrusion into the political sovereignty of a neighbouring country.

The Lockerbie incident was a watershed moment for Libya's regional policy in North Africa with the imposition of an international embargo on the country. Ben Ali pursued relations with Libya very differently than his predecessor as he turned his attention towards making Tunisia a model of neo-liberal development, thereby abandoning a great many of the ideological claims of Bourguiba. The period between 1969 and 2010 thus provides a rich ground from which to explore the decline of ideology in the inter-state relations of Tunisia and Libya. In this thesis, I will undertake an in-depth analysis of these relations with a special focus on the state policies led by various regimes in both countries.

Significance of the Study

Libya and Tunisia are two countries which have made considerable progress towards political union in the past, only to make a radical reversal aiming to suspend interdependent economic links. The Maghreb provides a broader context to this meandering state of affairs. There is a common frame of reference for most, if not all, of the states in this region. History, culture, language, economics, bind together Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya in an environment that is seemingly conducive to political integration on the same level as the European Union (EU). Despite the shared dimensions that make the Maghreb a distinctive and unique mosaic of nations, each individual state enjoys closer bilateral ties with the EU than with its own neighbours. Since its inception in the late 1980s, many doubts have been raised concerning the political viability of the AMU.. Narrowly conceived interests of states, *raison d'état*, have dominated the thinking of policy-makers in North Africa.

Ideology has also been a major source of contention where nationalisms of various types have competed against one another in a tension-filled political climate. Bitter rivalry between Algeria and Morocco over the question of Western Sahara, with the former demanding its self-determination and the latter claiming the territory as part of its sovereignty, as a recurring

theme.¹ Libyan-Tunisian relations thus appear to have, to a considerable degree in recent years, transcended the obstacles hindering closer political and economic co-operation, with profound implications for some form of integration. For Michael Hudson, the end of Arabism is clearly apparent, but the push towards co-operation among a diversity of states, while retaining their political sovereignty, is very much alive.² Regionalism continues to exert influence on inter-state associations.

The Maghreb displays, as previously noted, the ingredients for an ever closer integration that is similar to that in other regions. However, the absence of supra-national organisations able to bring individual states to negotiate their differences for a common goal has severely restricted any efforts towards political and economic unity. The closer ties thus enjoyed between Tunisia and Libya from the early 1990s until 2010 represent a remarkable divergence from the conflictual relations among the nations of the Maghreb. Another important dimension lay in the fact that these closer ties were formed largely without the involvement of supra-national institutions: regimes and open borders facilitated an exchange of people and goods.

Libya and Tunisia find themselves in a region lacking the political will and resources to impose a catalyst for integration from above. The lack of co-operation among the countries of the Maghreb can be better understood as a product of both internal and external factors. Dependency on oil revenues, as the main source of national income, has facilitated direct ties with oil-importing countries and regional blocs, such as the EU.³ Algeria and Libya are two prime examples of nations which have forged bilateral trading connections with Southern European countries across the Mediterranean Sea. Europe continues to be the main trading partner for both of these North African countries.

Little or no investment in the industrial sectors in the economy of the Maghrebi countries has led to a weak manufacturing infrastructure. Subsequently, Western countries have filled the

¹ Y.H. Zoubir, 'Algerian-Moroccan Relations and Their Impact on Maghribi Integration', *The Journal of North African Studies* 5/3 (2000), 43-74.

² Michael C. Hudson, 'Introduction: Arab Integration: An Overview', 28, in Michael C. Hudson (ed.), *Middle East: The Politics and Economics of Arab Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

³ Abdul Hassan Zalzal, *Joint Arab Action and the Comprehensive Development and Self-Reliance: Models Rely on Oil, Not Self-Reliance* (Beirut: University Institute for Research, 1987).p 7.

vacuum in exporting industrialised goods and products to the region.⁴ Unstable relations among the states in the Maghreb have had deleterious effects on the level of economic exchange. Profound disagreements motivated by clashing political agendas appear to be contributing to the poor relations within AMU.⁵ Libyan-Tunisian attempts at economic co-operation in the 1990s must be situated in a context that is in part informed by the shared political and economic experience of the Maghreb.⁶

Hypothesis

Repeated failures to generate enough momentum for political unity in the Maghreb were largely based on the conflicting interests of each state. The postcolonial context of Tunisia and Libya was characterised equally by opportunities and limitations for greater political and economic co-operation. In this period, the widespread proliferation of various ideologies, ranging from Arabism to Socialism to Third Worldism, inevitably influenced the thinking of state elites in Arab countries. Paradoxically, the adoption of the idea of the creation of a supra-national state among the Arabs, particularly by Gaddafi, proved to be divisive. Arabism was largely understood in terms of revolution, rather than gradual integration or co-operation among sovereign states. There were several attempts at the creation of a political union of Arab states during the Cold War. From 1969, the ruling regime in Libya actively pursued the path of Arab nationalism which was on the march during the fifties and Sixties. The Gaddafi regime in Libya, influenced by Arab nationalism that reached unprecedented heights in the aftermath of the Suez crisis, led to the existence of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria in 1958. However, most of these attempts were not spearheaded by supra-national organisations. Instead, the initiative was driven by fusing existing national institutions, which later separated when political union was deemed to be a failure. Gaddafi's Libya was a passionate yet ineffectual advocate of Arab unity in the short-lived political projects of unity with Egypt and Sudan in 1970, Tunisia in 1974, Syria in 1981, and Morocco in 1984.⁷

⁴Mustafa Abdullah, 'Joint Arab Action and the Comprehensive Development and Common Self-Reliance', *Unity Magazine*, NO 89 (February 1992), pp. 45-59.

⁵Mustafa Khushaim, 'Euro - Maghreb Partnership Agreements and Its Impact on Foreign Trade of AMU.', *Maghreb University Magazine*, No 7 (2009), p 49.

⁶*ibid*, p 51.

⁷Meelad Harthy, *Libyan Unitary Experiences* (Jamaheryah Publishing House, 1997), p 147. See also, kaeed Mohammed Tarbosh, *Unitary Experiences in the Arab world*. (First edn. Alexandria . Egypt, campus Modern office, 2006.

Other grand projects with revolutionary implications for the Maghreb can be found in the socialism espoused by Algeria and Tunisia, which was later replaced by neo-liberal reforms aimed at creating a vibrant private sector in line with the dictates of the International Monetary Fund. Bourguiba had espoused Tunisian nationalism, which rejected Arabism and other revolutionary ideologies during his rule. The ideology of the Tunisian regime defined the nation in narrow terms, ignoring the claims of radical politicians, such as Jamal Abdul Nasser and Gaddafi, which then led to a bitter rivalry between Bourguiba and these men. For a few decades, Gaddafi formulated his project of Arab unity through the discourse of revolution. Perhaps the forceful implementation of Gaddafi's ideology was a cause of failure, as it soured relations with neighbouring regimes in the quest to base their rule on stability rather than the ensuing uncertainty that is normally associated with revolutions. However, Sanusi Hammad attributes this failure to the socialist system adopted in Libya during that period. This system resembled, in its economic policies, the socialist system followed in the USSR during the same period.⁸

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the Libyan regime, still under the firm grasp of Gaddafi, changed its policies about how to achieve a form of Arab unity. Gradual integration of the economic and social spheres of the countries located in the Maghreb became the guiding agenda. In light of the above, I propose the following hypothesis: two distinct periods characterise inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya. The first period, between 1969 and 1987, was primarily marked by tensions, with Bourguiba and Gaddafi espousing opposing ideologies for the countries they ruled. While Tunisia fostered amicable links with Europe and the United States of America, Libya turned to other newly independent nations in what became known as the Third World, inspired by anti-imperialism. Libya was not a bystander in crises such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁹ The second period begins with the succession of Ben Ali to the Tunisian office of President in 1987 and it ends with his overthrow in 2010. Neo-liberal reforms were implemented that sought to curb governmental intervention in the development of an economy with free market mechanisms.¹⁰ Ben Ali discarded Bourguiba's previous insistence on Tunisia, as a nation distinct from other Arab

⁸Sanusi Hammad, *Political and Economic System in Libya* (First edn.: Tripoli: Publishing House, 2008).p 139.

⁹ Abu Qasim al-mabruk, 'Effects of Political Factors on Arab Maghreb Union', MA Dissertation (Politics Department (Tripoli, Libya: Academy for Graduate Studies, 2007). P 56.

¹⁰Mustafa Khushaim, 'The Inter-Arab trade. From the political sensitivity to the digital gap :A case study of the Libyan foreign trade towards the Arab states.', Conference of inter-Arab trade and economic integration (University of Jordan, Amman, 20-22 September 2004).pp124-145.

states. Instead, he began a process of fostering better relations with regimes in the Arab world, the Maghreb and Africa.

In the early 1990s, harsh international sanctions were imposed on Libya as a result of the accusations levelled against the role of Gaddafi in the Lockerbie bombing. Further isolation after the dissolution of the USSR changed the international balance of power in the world to the disadvantage of Libya's pan-Arabist and Third World policies. It can be argued that a more moderate and rational approach to global and regional issues of politics were adopted by Tripoli.¹¹ Ideological considerations seem to have been set aside for the overt objective of economic survival in a radically changed geopolitical context. The decline of ideology in Libyan-Tunisian relations created a previously restricted opportunity for economic and political exchange. Differences of opinion in the ideological sphere positioned two longstanding regimes against each other. Crucial links between Libya and Tunisia, the hypothesis I will try to establish in this thesis, improved when ideology was de-emphasised in the quest for greater political stability premised on economic co-operation.

Key Questions

The contemporary history of Libya and Tunisia is bound together in a sequence of events which requires investigation into the factors leading to both antagonism and co-operation. For this purpose, I propose to ask a set of questions against the backdrop of the above hypothesis. These questions will enquire into how relations between Libya and Tunisia were conceived and into the changes occurring in the conceptions articulated. I have divided the questions in two categories. The first category contains the primary question. Category two poses further questions that are derived from the primary question in an attempt to address the hypothesis stated in this thesis.

Category One:

1. How has the decline of the role of ideology in Libyan-Tunisian relations led to greater co-operation between the two countries?

Category Two:

¹¹ibid.

- 1.1 What is the context within which Libyan-Tunisian relations have developed?
- 1.2 What were the motivations behind the inter-state policies pursued by Libyan and Tunisian statesmen?
- 1.3 How were Libyan-Tunisian relations manifested?
- 1.4 What are the challenges and obstacles that hinder co-operation between Libya and Tunisia?

These questions will be posed in relation to the ideas, opinions and views of political groups which have directly participated in the decision-making process on inter-state relations between Libya and Tunisia. Official narratives produced by political elites possess a lot of weight in exploring the hypothesis and answering the research questions contained in this section. I am chiefly interested in finding out what the motivations for greater co-operation between Libya and Tunisia are, against a context which has not necessarily led to amicable links between these two states and other Maghrebi nations. Further, the potential for Libyan-Tunisian co-operation was realised, to a larger degree than in previous periods, in a new situation. A process of 'de-ideologisation' appears to have effected an improvement in the relations between these two countries. Foreign policy initiatives were premised on the achievement of joint interests which were conceived in a context of both neo-liberal reforms for Tunisia, and the need to break out of political isolation for Libya. Local dynamics were important in facilitating co-operation across borders, without the precarious threat of ideology leading to the deterioration of political ties and negatively affecting economic links.

I aim to explore how this co-operation unfolded with a new leader in charge of Tunisia and a dramatically transformed geopolitical context for Gaddafi's Libya. The insights arrived at through addressing the hypothesis and answering the research questions ought to lead to a new body of information, which can then be used by policy-makers involved in deepening the ties between Tunisia and Libya in the Maghreb without being entangled in a web of ideological debates. Co-operation rather than antagonism is the key concept emanating from this line of inquiry. Improvement in relations between Libya and Tunisia can perhaps be used as standard from which to evaluate the existing relations among the other nations of the Maghreb and also a model for emulation to foster greater integration based on plural sovereignties. The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee is a noteworthy organisation

dedicated to resolving the bilateral differences between Tunisia and Libya. Minutes and the decisions from this committee will demonstrate the motivations, tactics and goals of individuals who are charged with overcoming the obstacles to Libyan-Tunisian integration.

Research Methodology

Inter-state relations can be subjected to a variety of methods of investigation. The focus on changes in policies needs to be situated next to continuities of practices and norms. Political actors are motivated by many intentions to pursue a course of action. Regimes are an example of a collective organisation composed of individuals that are united due to class interests, political affiliations, kinship ties or ideology. Libya and Tunisia were ruled by regimes which displayed a remarkable ability to withstand internal and external challenges. The reigns of Bourguiba and Gaddafi covered more than half of the period of independence with their influence still being felt in the present. Different factors pulled and pushed Tunisia and Libya in the opposite directions of antagonism and co-operation over three decades.

However, the succession of Ben Ali in Tunisia ushered in a new era of neo-liberal economics to the northernmost tip of the Maghreb. The dominance of ideology, particularly Arab nationalism, thus fell victim to the policy of the free-market that was adopted in Tunis and later benefitted Tripoli. In this thesis, I will investigate why and how this change took place, with particular reference to the motivations of political actors and the increasingly frequent instances of co-operation between Tunisia and Libya. I will employ a qualitative methodological framework to examine the primary sources in the process of addressing the hypothesis proposed. Additionally, the research process is divided into two stages. Stage one is centred on the collection of data, which is followed by the interpretation of this data at the second stage.

Primary Sources

Various research methods will be used in the course of this research. They are underpinned by the need to collect and interpret data. There exist an immense number of sources, ranging from interviews to government documents to correspondence. Data from primary sources, it

is argued, possess a high degree of reliability due to their not being processed.¹² First-hand information from decision-makers or participants is an invaluable source for the researcher. The data contains the testimony of individuals who act as witnesses to the significant moments in contemporary history. Potential risks of exaggeration and distortion cannot be ruled out.¹³ Subjective elements necessarily intrude in the act of retelling or recording a distant or more recent event, with political, ideological or personal biases being present.

Personal Interviews

Interviews with prominent individuals will be used to collect data. Eliciting information from the speech of interviewees is the objective guide to my use of this method.¹⁴ Engaging with interviewees through a face-to-face technique will be appropriate for the purpose of obtaining a depth of meaning and to gain further insights and understanding of the themes of the interview.¹⁵ Further, the adoption of interviews will produce a set of rich information to be interpreted in a variety of ways. Different types of interviews can be used to elicit various levels of information from interviewees. In the next subsection, I will briefly outline three types of interviews: structured interviews, unstructured or in-depth interviews, and semi-structured interviews.

Structured Interviews

Previously prepared questions are posed to interviewees in structured interviews. The use of closed-ended questions is intended to provide uniformity to interviews, based on the same questions for a single design scope.¹⁶ A large sample of interviewees is identified in the attempt to discern a pattern of similarities or differences of opinion.

Unstructured or In-depth Interviews

Open-ended questions are asked in unstructured interviews. The primary objective of this type of interview is to collect in-depth information from interviewees.¹⁷ Further, different

¹²Jack R Fraenkel, Norman E Wallen, and Helen H Hyun, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* (: McGraw-Hill New York, 1993)..

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴K. Louise Barriball & A. While, 'Collecting Data Using a Semi-Structured Interview: A Discussion Paper', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19/2 (2006), 328-35.

¹⁵J. Ritchie & J. Lewis, *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (Sage Publications Limited, 2003).p. 138.

¹⁶B.J. Zimmerman & M.M. Pons, 'Development of a Structured Interview for Assessing Student Use of Self-Regulated Learning Strategies', *American Educational Research Journal*, 23/4 (1986), 614-28.

¹⁷W. Moyle, 'Unstructured Interviews: Challenges When Participants Have a Major Depressive Illness', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 39/3 (2002), 266-73.p. 267.

participants can be interviewed, which “might generate data with different structures and patterns.”¹⁸ A sense of anarchy in the focus of the themes to be explored may emerge. However, unstructured interviews grant a very large space of freedom to both the interviewer and interviewee in which to discuss issues without being hindered by a rigid formula of questioning.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The acquisition of information through open-ended questions is the defining characteristic of semi-structured interviews.¹⁹ A certain degree of flexibility is present in the posing of questions. Varying levels of standardisation are centred on a drawn up set of questions.²⁰ Participants should be not stopped when their answers go beyond the conceived scope of the themes of the research.²¹ A simultaneous advantage and disadvantage of employing semi-structured interviews is that interviewees are granted a wide margin of freedom, thereby weakening the influence that an interviewer is able to exert in shaping the overall thematic focus of research collection. However, this aspect is substantially less prominent than in unstructured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate method of the three types of interviews surveyed above for the research framework for this thesis. Participants will be interviewed in order to create the space needed to voice their experiences and opinions freely and without undue pressure. Interviewees form a crucial source of data through the use of this method of data collection. Written questionnaires have not been adopted in this research due to their inability to generate the level and depth of information that is needed to explore both the hypothesis and to answer the research questions.²² Primary sources, such as firsthand accounts from interviewees on key policy decisions and events lay the foundations for the construction of a theory that is able to investigate the hypothesis that is outlined earlier in this chapter.

¹⁸Yan Zhang and Barbara M Wildemuth, 'Unstructured Interviews', *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, (2009).p.2.

¹⁹U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications Limited, Newbury Park, 1998).p.94.

²⁰S.F. Rallis & G.B. Rossman, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, Incorporated, 2011).

²¹H.R. Bernard, *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology* (Sage Publications. Newbury Park, 1988).p.205.

²²Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project* : trans (1 edn.: Cairo: Al-Farouq Publishing House, 2006).p 145.

The decline in the role of ideology in the decision-making process of Tunisia and Libya from the 1990s until 2010 will thus require the interpretation of discourses that were present among the leaders of both states. Participants with direct or indirect roles in Libyan-Tunisian relations are to be recruited as interviewees. A list of specific questions is to be formulated that aim to elicit data in the form of answers from the interviewees. Further, these questions should be derived from the hypothesis and the key questions in the light of the known background, experience and knowledge of participants.²³

Challenges are always present at this stage of data collection. Interviews may experience a variety of issues. The duration of interviews can be much longer than anticipated. It will require extensive organisation to prepare interviews with participants based in countries where the researcher does not reside. Overseas visits to conduct interviews in Tunisia and Libya are necessary for this research. The availability of interviewees will thus need to be ascertained and further arrangements made in order to meet them, e.g., the time and place of interview. Interviewees will be presented with information explaining the nature of the research and its goals, an official letter from the doctoral supervisor and the academic institution of attendance, reassurance that opinions or information will only be used for academic purposes, asking permission to make audio recordings of the interview, etc.

In a case where first-hand information is obtained from high profile decision-makers in Libya and Tunisia, this is a challenge. The nature of both regimes makes getting information very difficult, because such people think that it is safer not to reveal any data that might affect them in different ways in terms of safety and the upgrading of their official position in the future. This has been a challenge to me during my data collection. I made a huge effort to convince those interviewees that my research is for academic purposes and will not be used for any political purposes. I also tried to overcome this difficulty by finding ways to circumvent it, since I have wide connections and am well-known in Libyan society as both an academic and researcher. In addition, I have very good connections with a number of colleagues in Tunisian Universities who helped me to contact high profile interviewees in Tunisia. Building a kind of confidence in these people through colleagues and friends thus facilitated the collecting of the data for this research project.

²³ *ibid.* pp.152-156

However, it seems that some decision-makers in Libya and Tunisia retained fears and did not reveal information because of the sensitivity nature of these data, or because of the fear that it would be used for political purposes. However,, on the other hand, I was surprised at the amount of very useful information that I collected from interviewees.

Official and Past Documents

State archives are home to a rich assortment of primary sources. Contemporary and historical documents, ranging from treatises to internal correspondence between policy-makers, can be used to construct an interpretation of both the present and past. Comparative studies of political systems have employed experience of international affairs to promote relations and resolve diplomatic crises between states.²⁴ In this thesis, the historical background of the Maghreb plays a pivotal role in shaping contemporary Libyan-Tunisian relations. Identifying the appropriate and relevant documents from government archives which can shed light on these relations can deepen the scope of the research to be undertaken here. However, the concerns of security surrounding past events, and the need for political sensitivity in the current period may impede access to revealing documents.

In light of these obstacles, I have resorted to a few alternative sources of data to compensate for any gaps in my knowledge of important events or decisions. Interviews with prominent individuals who were either present in the decision-making processes of Libya and Tunisia, or had direct access to individuals who were, can in some way mitigate the lack of access to certain government documents. I have compiled a number of official documents from a variety of Tunisian and Libyan sources. They will be subjected to an in-depth examination and critical interpretation of their contents. Copies of signed agreements concerning business, security, politics and economics, exist between Tunisia and Libya. Further, there are government documents which have never been previously cited in academic studies. These vary from colonial treaties during the Ottoman-French period to more contemporary bilateral agreements on increased economic co-operation between the two post-colonial nations.

I will use secondary sources to identify gaps in the current scholarship on the themes which require investigation. A variety of texts serve as a foundation for my research into the decline of ideology in the inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya and the subsequent

²⁴ Ahmad Hamdani, *Foundation in Political Science* (Amman: Majdalawi Book House, 2004). P 133.

improvement in these relations in the period under examination: books, unpublished theses and research projects, magazines, newspapers and internets.²⁵ Reading the secondary sources on Libyan-Tunisian relations, the Maghreb, international affairs and Middle East politics will lead to an informed approach in regard to this thesis' hypothesis and research questions. I will thus be able to reject, refute or validate the claims contained in the range of sources examined.²⁶

Deliberations on Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis

The primary sources which form the central focus of interpretation in this research demonstrate a coherent and meaningful system of ideas. Human beings live in a world that is characterised by a constant negotiation of meaning. Languages and images are the main expression that conveys the intentions and thoughts of an individual in a society. Debates have taken place among theorists and scholars on the definition of discourse, with its meaning differing across fields and among researchers.²⁷ In recent years, the concept of discourse has been elaborated into a tool for interpretation. Studies of discourse vary from reference to mere speech or conversation to the critical examination of a social system.²⁸ Zellig Harris defines discourse as being an extended series of utterances, consisting of a speaker seeking to influence a listener.²⁹ Similarly, for Olivier, discourse is a set of messages between different parties.³⁰

In this thesis, the social connotations of discourse are directly relevant to understanding the relationship of ideas and agency. Political power is ultimately dependent on social formations. Even authoritarian states cannot be autonomous of the broader society from which they govern, using a pre-existing set of symbols, language, culture and customs to communicate with their subjects. Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress make an important distinction between text and discourse. Text can be defined as the internal discourse structure,

²⁵ Jack R Fraenkel, Norman E Wallen, and Helen H Hyun, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* (7: McGraw-Hill New York, 1993).

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Mohammed Nasser Khawaldeh, 'The Concept of Discourse as a Means of Communication', <<http://kenanaonline.com/users/MOMNASSER/posts/380864>>, accessed 4/8 /2012.

²⁸Mohammed Al-Sffar, 'Discourse Analysis and the Problematic of the Transfer of Concepts', *RenaissanceMagazine*, 6/ 4 (October 2005).p 100.

²⁹Zellig Harris, *Discourse Analysis* (New York, USA: Linguistic Society of America, 1952).pp.4-30.

³⁰Robo Olivier, *Language of Education: Pedagogical Discourse Analysis*, trans. Omar Okan (Cairo: Africa Forum, 2002). pp.41-42.

and is comprised of a vocabulary, structures and sentences.³¹ Discourse involves a social operation that includes texts with textual analysis subsumed into discourse analysis.³² Three critical components form a discourse. The author, the text and the reader are involved in a process of communication. A basic linguistic unity is present throughout, which enables the direct communication of meaning in the form of consecutive sentences from the speaker to the listener that are motivated by the goal of persuasion, of the message contained therein, or to disseminate a piece of information.³³

For Norman Fairclough, discourse is:

"a social practice which constructs social identities, social relations and the knowledge and meaning systems of the social world ... [which] both reflects and produces the ideas and assumptions relating to the ways in which personal identities, social relations, and knowledge systems are constituted through social practice".³⁴

Fairclough goes on to propose that when we look at language as speech and social practice, we are committed not only to analysing the text and production processes, but to analyse relations between the text and procedures, and their social conditions are related to the context and the external circumstances, especially those which are social and institutional.³⁵ Discourse is thus the abstract relations between signifiers and signifieds, but it can be used as ideological weapons that are rooted in a society. Discourses, according to Diane MacDonell, are both a means of control and struggle, rooted in a materialist context.³⁶ Identical events tend to be interpreted differently by human beings. Although politicians or writers may report on the same event, their accounts will inevitably differ.³⁷ The existence of many discourses poses the question about which way is the most appropriate to study them.

³¹Mahmoud Okasha, *The Language of Political Discourse, Linguistic Practical Study in the Light of Communication Theory* (Cairo: Egyptian Renaissance Library, 2002) p 57.

³²Norman Fairclough, 'Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis', *Discourse & Society*, SAGE Journals, 3 /2 (1992), pp. 193-217.

³³Rejeb Ramadan Abdulwahab, 'Western Political Discourse Concept and Characteristics', <<http://maamri-ilm2010.yoo7.com/t217-topic>>, accessed 20/8/ 2012.

³⁴A.E. Nielsen & H. Nørreklit, 'A Discourse Analysis of the Disciplinary Power of Management Coaching', *Society and Business Review*, 4/3 (2009), 202-14.p.204.

³⁵N.Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Longman, 1990). p.66.

³⁶ Diane MacDonell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 97-98.

³⁷Khawaldeh, 'The Concept of Discourse as a Means of Communication', op cit

Wider political and social formations are intertwined with the existence of discourses. Michel Foucault locates the phenomenon of a discourse in the power relations of a society. These power relations take place between those who control and the controlled, thereby producing regimes of truth, reality and values undermining any revolutionary potential.³⁸ Discourses are thus historical constructions with social-wide implications. In the Arab world, Mohammed Abed al-Jabri's own work has focused on discourse with both empowering and disempowering effects. Concepts and frameworks interact to create a world of meaning. Rules govern, similarly to Foucault's claims, what can be said or written by an author in a discourse and these enable him to convey his point of view to the reader.³⁹ However, the reader is not a passive actor in receiving meanings from the author. The reader employs tools to negotiate meaning, similar to the approach of the author in his construction of a text, which results in plural readings in a discourse.⁴⁰

Political discourse analysis also offers critical insights into the study of inter-state relations. Governments, political parties, resistance groups and popular leaders employ a diversity of political ideas to communicate with the audiences. The use of provocative symbols to stir the minds and hearts of people is a central feature of political discourses.⁴¹ Jamal Abdul Nasser was a charismatic figure who achieved a powerful impact, thanks to the content of his speeches. beyond Egypt's borders, reaching pan-Arab and Third World constituencies. Media outlets and journalists proved to be instrumental in this political discourse in the absence of the use of media by his opposition.⁴² The Voice of the Arabs was particularly effective in spreading a revolutionary vision of the Arab world which influenced individuals and groups, including a young Gaddafi in the 1960s. The broadcasting of the message occurs within the framing of reality in political discourses due to the ability to enact change that is possessed by actors.⁴³

³⁸ Frances E. Gill, *The Moral Benefit of Punishment: Self-Determination as a Goal of Correctional Counselling* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 24-25.

³⁹ Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, *Contemporary Arab Discourse, Analytical and Critical Study* (Beirut, Lebanon: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1994).p 10.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Abdulwahab, 'Western Political Discourse Concept and Characteristics', op cit.

⁴² Mahmoud Okasha, 'Analysis of Obama's Speech to the Muslim World in the Light of the Rhetorical Effects and Political Achievements', <<http://www.lissaniat.net/viewtopic.php?t=1974&sid=608370fd637940ebb6d6ed95d24e0043>>, accessed 02/04 2014.

⁴³ Abdulwahab, 'Western Political Discourse Concept and Characteristics', op cit.

Action and discourse are always linked in political discourses, thereby justifying the need to study politics through them.⁴⁴ More generally, the links between political power and discourse do not simply revolve around planning and organisation by authorities, but directly relate to the interdependent reality of language and social dominance.⁴⁵ The study of discourse through the context of its construction demonstrates the links of a political discourse with its surrounding society, which it addresses and which shares similar values.⁴⁶ Governments and regimes use a number of tools to make their citizens subject to their authority. From political recruitment to socialisation, political power aims to direct and influence the lives of individuals and groups in society in order to obey those in authority.⁴⁷ Ideas, for the sender, are the foundation of a political discourse, rather than the words used.⁴⁸

Modern democratic societies rely exclusively on coercion. Persuasion is a critical element in allowing a discourse to gain a degree of legitimacy, or 'soft hegemony', among different social groups.⁴⁹ Hegemony can be understood to create the ideological conditions within which the subordination of citizens is involved in a process of consent and persuasion.⁵⁰ Force and violence appear as the opposites of consent and persuasion, respectively. In the cases of Tunisia and Libya, the dualities of force and consent, on the one hand, and persuasion and violence, on the other hand, were by no means mutually exclusive.

Discourse Analysis and Inter-State Relations

The above discussion on the scholarship on discourse analysis and political discourse analysis shows the diversity of approaches that employ the concept of discourse. Studies in politics have tended to reformulate the purely linguistic definition of discourse into a broader framework of interpretation focusing on society and politics. This thesis follows the latter path in applying discourse analysis to both written and verbal texts from key individuals involved in Libyan-Tunisian relations in the period from 1969 until 2010. Improved relations

⁴⁴ Mohammad Khairuddin, 'Political Discourse', <<http://www.maghress.com/alittihad/91217>>, accessed 2/3/2014..

⁴⁵ Colin B Grant, 'Destabilising Social Communication Theory, *Culture & Society*', 20/6 (2003), p 95-119.

⁴⁶ Robin Wooffitt, *A Comparative and Critical Introduction, Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis* (1st edn.: London: Sage Publications, 2005).p.18.

⁴⁷ Abdulwahab, 'Western Political Discourse Concept and Characteristics', op cit

⁴⁸ Abdulwahab, 'Western Political Discourse Concept and Characteristics', op cit

⁴⁹ Teun A. Van Dijk, 'Discourse Semantics and Ideology, *Discourse & Society*', *SAGE Journals* 6/2 (1995), p. 253.

⁵⁰ Benedetto Fontana, 'Hegemony and Power in Gramsci', Richard Howson and Kylie Smith (eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 100-101.

ensued, according to the proposed hypothesis, in the second period from the early 1990s. Examination of the data collected, in the form of interviewees' answers and official government documents, will provide the opportunity to apply discourse analysis. What follows is a detailed outline of the elements in the method of discourse analysis to be employed in this thesis.

The second stage of my research, following the collection of data, is its interpretation according to the concept of discourse. The analysis of the political and social significance of words is a primary objective. The relationship between a signifier and signified is an essentially constructed one in "a complex interaction of signifiers, which has no obvious endpoint".⁵¹ No natural correspondence exists between sounds and meanings. A word acquires its meaning in a process with reference to other words and meanings. Discourses are thus a world of meaning which is constantly redefined by human beings in a variety of settings. Political actors combine the facets of power and meaning in their construction of discourse, seeking to endow their ideas and actions with legitimacy. External realities become subsumed into an open-ended system of ideas, norms, values and truths. Political actors undertake the act of self-interpretation at the same time as they interpret the world. 'Self-interest' and 'ideology' are conceived in terms of the cultural references of individuals.

At this point, I will try to review the various meanings of ideology that are contained in scholarship on the topic. Douglass North proposes to define it as "intellectual efforts to rationalize the behavioural pattern of individuals and groups."⁵² Thought and agency are married together in a context which awards a primary place to actions and behaviours, followed by their *de facto* acceptance in a society. A lack of religious content in ideology is accompanied by its specific association with a society's socio-economic and political structures.⁵³ Psychology has also been introduced in the discussion of the nature of ideology. The inclusion of the argument that mental perception is restricted by this exact intellectual subordination towards various social forms, the origins and functions of this mental vision,

⁵¹ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 110-111.

⁵² D.C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (Norton New York, 1981).

⁵³ Bassam Tibi, 'Islam and Secularization: Religion and the Functional Differentiation of the Social System', *ARSP: Archiv für Rechts-und Sozialphilosophie/Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy*, (1980), 207-22.

can be seen in different theoretical approaches.⁵⁴ Broader inquiries into the social dimensions of ideology have proposed it to be a society's collection of rational thoughts with a stable philosophy and vision of politics, economic, culture, etc.⁵⁵ The social construction of ideology indicates its changing reality. For Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, the acquisition of values and concepts by a human being occurs through interaction with the surrounding social and cultural environment, including its ideologies, rather than in a natural or instinctive process.⁵⁶

Similarly to discourse, ideology does not allow those who espouse its contents to go outside its boundaries. Breaches of these boundaries may lead to ostracising or exclusion from the body politic or from mainstream society. Ideas cannot be developed outside of its original framework.⁵⁷ Necessarily, ideology lives in a closed circuit whereby the promotion of openness and directness is absent: the inability to make political or cultural compromises outside of its intellectual environment is a core characteristic.⁵⁸ Most definitions agree that ideology is a system of thoughts and beliefs.⁵⁹ The espousing of ideology involves the two dimensions of describing the world and prescribing action within it. The interpretations of reality are carried out at the psychological and philosophical levels of an ideology. Conservative or radical platforms for action are proposed, depending on the sense of alienation that is experienced by ideologues and their followers and which is caused within the society in which they live. "Uppermost values" in ideologies that are espoused by human beings and that are found among religions and nationalism, it has been argued, have had successful careers.⁶⁰

The contents of ideology can vary from rational and scientific postulates to religious or mystical symbolism. Totalitarian systems of ideas, norms and behaviours which claim to encompass all aspects of human existence, fall into the category of ideology. A critical

⁵⁴Zine El Abidine Abdul-Rahman, 'The Rescue between Ideology and Politics', <<http://www.sudaress.com/sudaneseonline/7841>>, accessed 17/ 1/ 2012

⁵⁵Morong C, 'Mythology, Ideology and Politics', Available at :< [cyrilmorong. com/MythIdeology. doc](http://cyrilmorong.com/MythIdeology.doc) , accessed 6/6/2012 .p1.

⁵⁶ Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, *Contemporary Arab Discourse, Analytical and Critical Study* (Beirut, Lebanon: Centre for Arab Unity Studies),p 10.

⁵⁷P. Salem, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* (Syracuse University Press, 1994) .p.2.

⁵⁸Ibid.p.3.

⁵⁹N. Rejwan, *Nasserist Ideology: Its Exponents and Critics* (John Wiley & Sons, 1974).p. 8.

⁶⁰Mahmoud Khalaf,Mustafa Khushaim and Malik Shahyouth, *Ideology and Politics (2nd edn.: Tripoli Jamaheryah Publishing House, 1997).p147*

distinction has been made between ideology and politics.⁶¹ While ideology may make absolute claims (or none at all) on power, politics and sovereignty, the actual practice of politics involves human beings who negotiate social and economic issues within the formal and informal spheres of agency. The role of ideology appears to be an important driving force behind the actions of regimes, societies and individuals. However, deviations from ideologies by political actors who profess to espouse them are as common as strict obedience to beliefs and values.

The discourses of regime elites contain the dimensions of power and meaning in the contest over ideologies, economic resources and political institutions. Power is understood in terms of both coercion and consent, on the one hand, and force and persuasion, on the other. I propose that human beings cannot live outside of a discourse. The challenging, contesting and subverting of discourses are possible. Even peculiar objects or human beings who are seemingly outside a discourse are defined by a discourse. Individuals or social groups can abandon one discourse and adopt another in line with its newly adopted institutions, norms and rules. Successive regimes in Tunisia and Libya have constructed discourses seeking to legitimise their rule and to communicate within and outside the political elite. I aim to apply discourse analysis to the data collected from a number of individuals and documents. Key words, phrases, synonyms and antonyms will be identified as I carry out a thematic interpretation of these texts. I will make links between words and meanings in the broader context of Libyan-Tunisian relations in the Maghreb. Antagonism, co-operation and integration are determined by the demands of ideology and *raison d'état* are reproduced in these texts in tandem with similar economic and political actions.

An intersubjective reality is constructed through the agreements and disagreements between political actors. Words are part of a larger social negotiation in a discourse that is seeking to preserve the *status quo* or *alter* reality. Discourse can also be viewed as an instance of agency in the construction of a meaningful reality. Events are interpreted according to a broader cultural worldview which provides the scope of actions that are understood to be legitimate or acceptable to the political actor's norms, values and beliefs. Motivations driving the inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya can thus be framed around a meaningful system of

⁶¹ S. Hall, 'The Problem of Ideology', *Critical dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (1st edn, London, Routledge, 1996), p 24.

words that are contained in written and verbal texts. Discourses in both countries have indicated a willingness to work with neighbours and prospective partners.

The hypothesis of this research will be investigated using discourse analysis to establish to what extent the decline of ideology can help explain greater co-operation between Tunisia and Libya. Primary sources are to be interpreted in light of the constructed nature of discourses and their importance in the self-interpretation of individuals and groups in a society that is experiencing changes. Individual written or verbal texts will be analysed in a broader investigation of a collection of texts. Similarities and differences within a single text will be established and subsequently followed by identifying similarities and differences across texts from individuals. Data will be collected from government documents which specifically deal with aspects of Libyan-Tunisian relations. Other data will be gathered through the conducting of interviews with officials who played a key role in the formulation and implementation of relations between the two countries. These written and verbal texts will be situated in a wider explanatory context of the dynamic between antagonism and co-operation which led to a short-lived political union bringing together Libya and Tunisia and an alleged Libyan-backed seizing of Gafsa. Libyan-Tunisian relations were far from stable in the period prior to 1987.

My application of discourse analysis is aware of the geopolitical divides in the Maghreb. I will not only examine the surface meanings of texts, but go deeper in interpreting the unspoken presuppositions that underpin the statements contained in the interview answers and documents. The selection of interviews will be based on prior knowledge of the proximity of the roles they occupied in the decision-making processes affecting Libyan-Tunisian relations. Secondary sources will provide the needed background information about which government institutions or bodies have directly participated in pushing apart and pulling together these Maghrebi states in the last half century. The views of individuals working for the government may not always tally with the official discourses of the organisation by which they are employed. Deeply subjective factors emerging from a person's socio-economic background, ideological beliefs or political affiliations can affect the extent to which statements in his answers in an interview diverge or converge with official discourses. For example, a formal request to interview an employee from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tunisia will, it can be assumed, yield information containing the Tunisian state's discourses on foreign policy and international affairs. I will carry out an extensive

investigation of multiple sources in order to establish the political discourses of the Tunisian and Libyan regimes concerning their inter-state relations over the last four decades. The frequent comparison of data from various sources will aid this process of interpretation. Although there may be indications among the participants of personal opinions which diverge from the discourses emanating from the state, these will prove useful in ascertaining the level and nature of the support for antagonism or co-operation between Tunisia and Libya among the decision-makers.

The force of a discourse in offering individuals compelling answers to their questions about the world surrounding them is both descriptive and prescriptive. It claims to analyse reality as it is, and it suggests various ways to preserve or change one's society. Force and persuasion have tended to go hand in hand in the Arab world. A social hierarchy has often been created when new regimes have emerged in Tunisia and Libya. The arrival of Bourguiba, Gaddafi and Ben Ali in the offices of power meant a new system, with new ways of thought and action in various spheres of life, both in Tunisia and Libya. State-sponsored discourses sought to redefine Tunisia and Libya in the images of Bourguiba and Gaddafi respectively. The policies of the Bourguiba regime reflected a discourse that was deeply sceptical of the call to Arab unity across North Africa and the Middle East. Although Ben Ali was less enthusiastic about citing nationalist ideological claims for his policies, he implemented a neo-liberal ideology in the Tunisian economy. International conditions made themselves felt in Tunisia and the regime responded by adapting to this new context.

To the north of Tunisia, the European Union gathered momentum in its expansion, with economic opportunities opening up for the Maghrebi nation. Further, the attraction of regional blocs was manifested in the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union. A change of discourse appears to have occurred in the example of Tunisia from the late 1980s and early 1990s. This change led to a pronounced shift in how Tunisia interacted with neighbouring Libya in ways that had previously not been pursued, or which had been short-lived. Ideological considerations, such as liberalism or a fusionist Arabism, were relegated to the margins. Free market ideas were the driving force in Tunis, with greater economic co-operation being advocated and supported by the new Ben Ali regime from 1987. Libya was a direct beneficiary of this novel political and economic approach from Tunisia, as it re-defined its own role in the Maghreb and in international affairs. During the Cold War, the Libyan regime's political discourse emphasised a pan-Arab agenda.

Domestic and international factors had created a particular context from which Libya could formulate policies reflecting a bipolar political environment, where the USSR-USA rivalry was being played out across regions and continents throughout the world. Proxy wars were waged and the Gaddafi regime benefitted from the balance of power that involved the two superpowers. However, the internal dynamics of the country changed after the collapse of the USSR. A transition occurred from the insistent calls for Arab unity to moves towards greater participation in the African Union and symbolic shows of political liberalism. A radical shift in emphasis on the issue of inter-state relations can be identified. It can be argued that the previous discourse of a strident Arabism had exhausted its possibilities and objectives, thereby eroding its credibility. Libya suffered from the consequences of its foreign and domestic policies, which were accompanied by a change in the balance of international power. A unipolar world followed the dissolution of the USSR, with the USA taking a lead role in international affairs without a countervailing power. Tripoli's recognition of this new context witnessed a substantially revised or entirely new discourse around Libya's role in Africa and beyond.

Discourse analysis will thus be used as an analytical method with which to explore to the extent to which the decline of ideology played a role in explaining the growing co-operation between Tunisia and Libya. For this purpose, I will focus on co-operation between the two countries that is related to three criteria. The focus on discourses here reflects how the decline of ideology led to developments in bilateral economic relations. It will be used also to show how the decline of ideology created greater opportunities in different economic aspects. How has the decline of ideology led to the recreation of the private sector in Libya, and how has it played a role in promoting cross-border opportunities for businesses; the attempts at building a common and suitable infrastructure for bilateral trading ties and the creation of mega projects, as well as the flourishing of the banking sector. In the second of the criteria, the focus will be on the ways that the decline of ideology led to the founding of regional organisations and joint committees that facilitate greater cooperation between Libya and Tunisia, such as the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union, and Libyan-Tunisian joint committees. Previously, the founding of regional organisations were based on ideological beliefs, particularly pan-Arabism. In the third of the criteria, the emphasis will be on how the decline of ideology has enhanced economic liberalisation in terms of the free movement of capital and goods, and the increased volume of cross-border trade and joint commercial exchange that were subject to ideologically-based restrictions and standards. I will analyse

the joint agreements and laws that were agreed and passed in order to formalise commercial ties and joint investments. The focus will be on how trade and commercial relations between Tunisia and Libya were formalised.

In terms of the three criteria, above, discourse analysis will be used to interpret the text (official documents and interviews) in order to allow a better understanding of the meaning of greater economic co-operation. The three criteria will constitute a structure of meaning which can explain and elucidate on the role of the decline of ideology in the development of bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya. This discourse analysis will help in understanding how discourse regulates the political statements and actions (e.g., diplomatic actions, economic developments, agreements, etc.) of Tunisia and Libya, which I argue is informed by the decline of ideology.

A lack of research into the political discourses of both Tunisia and Libya is clearly evident. The research that does exist tends to focus on the linguistic dimensions of discourses, without exploring the social and political implications of the ideas. This shortage of critical studies on Tunisian and Libyan political discourses can be explained through the imposition of academic and journalistic limits by the authoritarian regimes in these two nations. Any study of discourses was obliged to be in accordance with the regime's diktats.. Most researchers were discouraged from pursuing this line of inquiry, and instead investigated less politically sensitive themes and topics. Self-censorship appears to have inhibited the curiosity and ability of researchers to look into political discourses and Libyan-Tunisian inter-state relations. In recent years, the above stated conditions no longer exist. Both the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes have been overthrown.

Grounded Theory and Neo-functionalism

Discourse analysis is best suited for the construction of a theory which is able to shed light on the role of ideology in politics. I will employ grounded theory to generate a theoretical lens, alongside the addressing of the hypothesis proposed for this research. Further, this hypothesis was formulated as a result of an initial survey of secondary and primary sources. The impact of the shift from a purely Arabist or nationalist ideology to greater economic and political co-operation between Tunisia and Libya, has not been adequately explored. One of the key implications of such a gap in Western and Arab scholarship on the relations between these

two Maghreb states is the freedom to generate and propose a new theoretical lens for the purpose of identifying their key social, political, economic and military facets.

Against this background, I will be able, through grounded theory, to formulate a set of critical insights that are as close as possible to the data collected from individuals and documents. A breakdown of the various elements which make up grounded theory will explain my choice to use this promising approach in this research. According to Kathy Charmaz, nine actions properly inform research that is based on grounded theory: collecting and analysing the data at the same time; focusing on actions and processes; applying comparative methods; utilising narrative or descriptive data seeking to generate new conceptual categories; developing inductive abstract analytical categories from systematic data analysis; emphasising theory construction; using theoretical sampling; looking for variation; developing a category for the purpose of interpretation.⁶²

Discourses on Libyan-Tunisian relations are not merely abstract constructions. They are a form of agency where meanings are embodied in speech acts or written texts. The research in this thesis is based on primary sources collected as a result of interviews, or from documents. Frequent consultation and analysis of data throughout the duration of my research will aid the process of generating categories of interpretation. A comprehensive examination of various sources will strengthen the basis of the insights that will be formulated through a methodical interpretation of texts. My proposed hypothesis serves as a useful reference point from which to redefine the scope of the investigation, if needs be, as a result of the interpretation of the data collected. I seek to explore the significance of the hypothesis while I generate categories which are derived from the primary sources. Further interviews may be carried to explore an existing or potential category of research.

An initial examination of the secondary sources shaped the line of inquiry into relations between Tunisia and Libya. Questions will then be formulated. Data collected from interviews will be cross-examined alongside data from official Tunisian and Libyan government documents. Additional interviews may be required to refine or clarify the categories of interpretation. The frequent revisiting of each stage of the collection and analysis of data will also be a key feature of the research to be carried out, using discourse as

⁶² Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2004), p. 15.

a broadly conceived concept of historical formations of meaning in a social context. Although this research will begin from a general awareness of the lack of secondary sources on Libyan-Tunisian relations, it will proceed from the collection of primary sources and their interpretation and then return to the additional collection of data in a continuous process of critical self-reflection.

Differences are noted by Linda A. Wood and Rolf O. Kroge between discourse analysis and grounded theory in the apparent eagerness of the latter to construct categories.⁶³ I propose to apply discourse analysis with a focus on the details contained in the categories of interpretation that are to be constructed in order to avoid the potential clash between these two approaches. Discourse analysis will take place at a level of analysis that is interested in how political actors constitute reality in a meaningful way, complemented by grounded theory aiming to generate a compelling theory of inter-state relations, with special reference to Tunisia and Libya.

Political discourses and actions from Tunis and Tripoli do not neatly fit into the pre-existing theories which purport to explain the motivations and actions towards greater political and economic co-operation. Previous projects of political union failed against the background of bitter rivalries between regimes espousing conflicting ideologies. Gaddafi was one of the most ardent supporters of a fusionist Arab unity, which he perceived to be urgently needed in the fight against imperialism and capitalism. However, none of the supra-national organisations which existed, such as the Arab League, possessed the necessary political will or mechanisms to give life to such a vision of Arabism. Short-lived integration thus occurred between previously established inter-state organisations and personalist regimes that were based on kinship ties and technocratic personnel. From the late 1980s, however, a change in the relations between Tunisia and Libya brought closer associations in the areas of politics and economics. In light of this important facet of Maghrebi-Maghrebi relations, the applicability of three schools of thought to this subject will be critically reviewed: neo-functionalism, institutionalism and inter-governmentalism.

The theory of neo-functionalism is centred on the existence of supra-national institutions fostering greater political and economic co-operation. The fusion of different states under an

⁶³ Linda A. Wood and Rolf O. Kroge, *Doing Discourse Analysis: Methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text*. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000), pp. 30-32.

overarching organisation is a key attribute of the way integration in a region can be effected. Neo-functionalism finds its vindication in the regional bloc of the European Union, with its institutions overseeing closer integration in economic, political and security spheres.⁶⁴ This theory is presumed to be applicable outside Europe in other regions.⁶⁵ However, the historical development of the EU is very different from that of regional organisations across the world. Arab countries experienced a series of crises during the Cold War, as much of Western Europe did not suffer from conflicts after the Second World War. Further, the colonial heritage of the Maghreb created a fragile context for nation-building. While Tunisia did possess a tradition of statecraft from the middle of the nineteenth century, Libya was originally divided into three separate provinces, with little or no connection apart from during Ottoman rule and, later, during Italian colonialism. In the Maghreb, a lack of supra-national institutions, with the resources to integrate Tunisia, Libya and other North African states, is clearly apparent.

Common or shared interests in the establishment of institutions are a core dimension in the theory of institutionalism. Increased co-operation between states is a criterion with which to measure the actions and behaviours of states. Governments create institutions so as to reinforce their co-operation.⁶⁶ The shrinking of obstacles and reduction of the cost of transactions complement the building of bridges of co-operation in order to develop the process of exchange between states, resulting in mutual benefits.⁶⁷ Organisations with high levels of institutionalisation, such as the EU, are a suitable case study for the application of this theory.⁶⁸ The dominance of institutions in political decision-making has received renewed attention in "new institutionalism", with its focus on both "formal and informal procedures, practices, relationships, customs, and norms".⁶⁹ This theory shares neo-functionalism's weakness in not being applicable to the Maghreb with its regional organisations, such as the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb Union, which lack either

⁶⁴Antje Wiener & Thomas Diez, *European Integration Theory*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004).pp. 45-49.

⁶⁵ Ibid.p.. p.47.

⁶⁶C. Jönsson and J. Tallberg, "Institutional theory in international relations," *Debating Institutionalism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, NY, available at <http://www.uni-muenster.de/Politikwissenschaft/Doppeldiplom/docs/IIR.pdf> (2008).p.1. accessed 14th April, 2014 .

⁶⁷R.O. Keohane & L.L. Martin, "The promise of institutionalist theory," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995).p. 42.

⁶⁸M. Cini, *European Union Politics* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2007). p. 122.

⁶⁹ Neill Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 572-573.

political clout or the necessary resources to influence the domestic politics of countries like Tunisia and Libya.

A realist perspective underpins the theory of inter-governmentalism, concerning the role of states in foreign policy-making.⁷⁰ Nation-states are the primary actors that push initiatives for co-operation and integration.⁷¹ The national interest of a state dominates the ways in which policies are formulated in a context with other self-interested states. In Tunisia and Libya, as well as other countries, the deliberate calculation of what is or could be the national interest has tended to be obscured by the narrow aspirations of regimes defined by patron-client relations that are based on kinship ties and global economic interests. Towards the end of the twentieth century, neo-liberal market reforms and authoritarian regimes often opened their countries to a new system of organising economic affairs, which is in direct contrast to the socialist programmes of the Cold War. In this context, Ben Ali's period in office introduced closer economic and political links between Tunisia and Libya.

Two general approaches to the nation-state appear to have been strong in the Arab world for most of the twentieth century. Acceptance of the nation-state in the first approach that staunchly defended the political sovereignty of individual Arab states within broader global and regional organisations, such as the Arab League.⁷² During the Cold War, the regimes which subscribed to this view of Arab political identity were described as 'conservative'. Integration was a matter of co-ordination among states and should not necessarily lead to the fusion of several states under a single leadership. The second approach disagreed strongly with this position. Arab unity was the natural aspiration for the Arabs, divided by colonial-era borders. A unitary state was the instrument required to fulfil the developmental needs of the Arab nation.⁷³ Revolutionaries across the Middle East and North Africa were attracted by this message which was propagated in the various guises of Jamal Abdul Nasser, Gaddafi and Michel Aflaq. Political and economic challenges faced by the Arabs were to be resolved through the co-operation of all Arab states against the forces of division, in the form of external or internal opposition, such as the conservative Arab regimes. Limited success was achieved in the area of Arab unity under a fusionist model: from the United Arab Republic

⁷⁰Ian Bache & Stephen George, *Politics in the European Union*, (2nd ed, Oxford University Press, 2006). p 12.

⁷¹Ibid. p 12.

⁷² Ibrahim Abdul-Hamid al-Awadi, Theories and Applications of Political Integration in the Arab World: practical studies of integration and disintegration according neo-functionalism, a research paper presented in Egypt-France forum under the title of globalisation-individualism in the Arab region, Cairo 1989, p 12.

⁷³Ibid.p13.

between Egypt and Syria (1958-61), to the Federation of Arab Republics (1972-77),⁷⁴ to the Federation between Libya and Morocco (1984- 86).⁷⁵

Conclusion

I have outlined in clear and direct terms what the object of inquiry will be in this research and how I will carry out the investigation into contemporary Libyan-Tunisian relations. Tensions between these two neighbouring states in the Maghreb have dominated the geopolitical context of this region. Attempts to find a common ground through integration were frustrated. Habib Bourguiba and Muammar Gaddafi presided over regimes with little or no patience for public discussions on the legitimacy of the official political discourses of their countries. Inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya form the principal area of investigation in this thesis. Ideologies from socialism to liberalism to Arabism were adopted by Bourguiba and Gaddafi in newly independent states. Uneasy associations between these two men also led to antagonisms in the political sphere, with repercussions in the economic and social spheres. Events such as Gafsa were a forceful reminder that integration in any form was not to be a realised dream in the near future. Gaddafi subscribed to pan-Arabist and Third Worldist ideologies for most of his reign. Implementation of these ideologies impacted on the Libyan regime in numerous ways. Towards the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s, political isolation pushed Libya into a difficult situation. Tunisia had experienced a coup against Bourguiba, which brought Ben Ali to power and created much needed economic and political opportunities for Libya. Inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya seem to have made a remarkable improvement.

Co-operation between Maghrebi nations has not emerged in a context that is determined by supra-national institutions. Organisations, such as the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb Union, are unable to provide the resources or to push domestic actors to behave in certain ways. No consensus exists on how to pursue the project of Arab integration and what it would mean in practice. The selection of Tunisia and Libya for this research is informed by what appears to be a refreshing exception to the antagonism that is characteristic of Maghrebi-Maghrebi relations, such as Moroccan-Algerian disagreements over Western

⁷⁴Elie Podeh, *The Decline of Arab Unity: The Rise and Fall of the United Arab Republic* (Sussex Academic Press, 1999). p 45 & 269.

⁷⁵Mark Tessler, "LIBYA IN THE MAGHREB," *The Green and the Black: Gadhafi's Policies in Africa* (Indiana University press 1988).

Sahara. To the north of the Maghreb, across the Mediterranean, the European Union has managed to unite disparate nation-states with different languages and political traditions. However, the countries of the Maghreb have built on their shared heritage for a form of political integration with economic effects. Since 1987, Libyan-Tunisian relations have undergone a transformation from mutual suspicion to better ties in their mutual economies and politics.

In an earlier section, I proposed the hypothesis that the decline of ideology in the political discourses of Tunisia and Libya led to positive developments between these two nations. Greater political and economic co-operation replaced the antagonisms of the past. The years from 1987 to 2010 are the key period in which this transformation took place, which brought mutual co-operation. One key research question is to be asked, and it is subdivided into other questions. Inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya will be situated in a context that runs alongside the motivations of political decision-makers. The manifestation of Libyan-Tunisian relations will be examined, whereby the challenges and obstacles that existed in the past and that continue in the present, will be identified.

The research methodology to be employed in this thesis is rooted in the qualitative tradition of the study of politics. A critical focus on meaning that is produced by human beings is instrumental in making sense of the behaviour and motivations of political actors. My examination of inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya will lead me to identify and explore primary sources, such as government documents and interviews. I will conduct interviews with key figures involved in, or related to, the decision-making process in this area. Further, the choice of semi-structured interviews is based on the degree of influence I will be able to exert in asking questions that are initially derived from the hypothesis and the key research questions. At the same time, this choice grants a large margin of freedom for interviewees to speak about their experiences and opinions in an honest and frank manner. Verbal and written texts will be interpreted to identify the discourse which constitutes the participants' world of meaning.

Applying discourse analysis to the data collected will ensure that the importance of language is recognised throughout my research into Libyan-Tunisian inter-state relations. All discourses not only say something about the world, but are part of the world. Political actors construct a meaningful reality through discourses. Collective institutions, such as regimes and states, similarly produce discourses that seek to interpret themselves and their own immediate

reality. The search for the legitimacy of what is spoken or thought or written is noticeable in political discourses. Regimes led by Bourguiba and Gaddafi were methodical in expressing populist, developmental and nationalist ideals to the societies they ruled. Political discourses were also directed at neighbouring regimes, with Ben Ali's neo-liberal agenda finding expression in actions and words. Further, the construction of a theory that is able to interpret inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya is located in the unsuitability of existing theories, such as neo-functionalism, to provide answers to the motivations and behaviour of political actors in the Maghreb: Tunisia and Libya. I will seek to generate categories for analysis that focus on the actions and discourses of the decision-makers who participated in shaping Libyan-Tunisian relations in the period between 1969 and 2010.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The Maghreb forms a very important area of study for political scientists, anthropologists, economists and other social scientists. Further, this region is connected to the wider context of the Arab world with its rich history. Other factors also contribute to the interest scholars and researchers may have in studying the Maghreb. From the economic and political initiatives of the European Union to the global war on terror, the countries of North Africa play an important part in the international community. In this chapter, I will examine the secondary sources relating to Libyan-Tunisian relations. Three key areas of research are of interest to me. The first concerns what has been written on co-operation in the Mediterranean. Many regions make up this area, which covers three continents. However, I will examine European and Maghrebi relations. The end of the Cold War opened up a number of opportunities for economic and political co-operation between an expanding European Union and the newly liberalised economies of the Maghreb. Initiatives such as the Western Mediterranean Forum and the Euro-Mediterranean Initiative were formed to foster closer relations between these two regions. Security, economics and politics are key themes to be discussed and acted upon, based on bilateral agreements between Arab states in the Maghreb and the European Union, or in individual European countries.

The second area focuses mainly on Arab regional blocs and co-operation among Arab countries. The establishment of the Gulf Co-operation Council, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Arab Co-operation Council were expressions of broader trends towards regionalism in a post-Arabist context. Arab writers and scholars have written at length about the need for Arab unity and the obstacles before this aspiration. Co-operation among Arab states has been limited to specific regions, rather than to the wider Arab world. The Gulf and the Maghreb appear to confirm this phenomenon for Arab researchers. Past rivalries within the Maghreb have created a situation that is not at all conducive to integration of the states in the region. For some, the European Union provides a model that could inspire an informed policy for an Arab unity which is currently a distant dream.

The last area to be examined in this literature review focuses on inter-state relations between Libya and Tunisia. Post-colonial North Africa experienced many changes in its political,

economic, cultural and social dimensions. During the Cold War, ideology appears to have been a strong factor. Observers of Libyan-Tunisian relations have an awareness that more disagreements than agreements characterise the interactions between these two countries. Ideology is cited by some as a factor for this hopeless state of affairs. A few explanations have been suggested for the deterioration of relationship between Tunisia and Libya while Habib Bourguiba and Muammar Gaddafi were in power. Ideology, and more specifically pan-Arabism, is mentioned as being instrumental in contributing to tensions and even conflicts. This chapter is thus divided into three parts, focusing on each of these areas: studies about the Mediterranean and Euro-Mediterranean partnership, in general; studies about Arab regional blocs; and the volume of economic co-operation among the Arab states.

Studies on Co-operation in the Mediterranean Region

Libyan-Tunisian relations are located in multiple contexts. One of these contexts is defined by the historic interactions within the Mediterranean Sea. Many regions can be found within this geographical space. There exist several studies which have highlighted the importance of co-operation among the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Mutual interests and shared problems are examined at length. New views and political initiatives have emerged from the growth of such studies, advocating projects of co-operation between states. The northern and southern regions of the Mediterranean have received attention in regard to the current state of economic and political links and future prospects for greater trading agreements. Libya and Tunisia have pursued closer relations with European countries. In a post-Cold War environment, the role of ideology, especially of pan-Arabism and socialism, has declined. Subsequently, the creation of bilateral and multilateral agreements appears to be an increasingly frequent event. The Western Mediterranean Forum, also known as the 5+5 Dialogue, included the South-Western European and Arab Maghreb nations. This growing trend to co-operation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean is confirmed by the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Initiative in 1995.⁷⁶ Maintenance of co-operation between the two regions was emphasised. For George Joffe and Alvaro De Vasconcelos, the Euro-Mediterranean Initiative was the first genuine project that sought to work towards the objective of integration between Europe and the southern Mediterranean

⁷⁶Dorothee Schmid, *'France and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: The Dilemmas of a Power in Transition', The Euro-mediterranean partnership: assessing the first decade*, (2005), 95-102.

countries.⁷⁷ Another point of view is proposed by Richard Gillespie: that it was part of a wider process towards the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, based on co-operation in political, security, cultural and social levels.⁷⁸ Further, there was a noticeable emphasis on the economic dimensions of relations between the two regions.⁷⁹

In other studies, the complex factors of ethnicity, religion, politics and culture in the relations between the different regions in the Mediterranean, have been neglected. The disproportionate emphasis on economics has tended to shape this view of European-non-European interactions. France and Italy have been identified as the primary driving forces in the promotion of European economic relations, demonstrated by their good economic links with the Maghreb.⁸⁰ The success of the European Union, for Abdul Moneim Said, will have an influential presence on other regional contexts, such the Arab world, as it is acutely sensitive to ongoing changes in global trends.⁸¹ However, a large degree of short-sightedness results from the exclusive focus on the economic, at the expense of other equally, if not more important factors that shape human societies. Pan-Arab ideology is no longer a major factor in shaping the policies of North African states and the responses of their northern neighbours across the Mediterranean. Interesting developments have emerged from the Euro-Mediterranean partnership's embrace of political, security, social and relations.⁸²

Political stability is often related to domestic and foreign security. New projects of co-operation between European and neighbouring regions, such as the Maghreb, are partly informed by the risk assessment of potential or actual threats. Although previous approaches to security have been narrowly defined, the present has created a promising opportunity to break out of them. The primary concern with safeguarding borders and the use of police forces to maintain domestic instability, is deemed to be lacking in effectiveness. Abdul-Aziz Muhammad espouses this view of the potential scope of relations between Europe and the Maghreb against the background of the Mediterranean. Security and development are

⁷⁷George Joffe and Alvaro De Vasconcelos, *The Barcelona Process: Building a Euro-Mediterranean Regional Community* (Taylor & Francis, 2014).p3.

⁷⁸ Richard Gillespie, 'Introduction: The EuroMediterranean Partnership Initiative', *Mediterranean politics, Volume 3, Issue 1*, (1997). P1-5.

⁷⁹ Ibid.p1.

⁸⁰Jon Marks, 'High Hopes and Low Motives: The New Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative', *Mediterranean Politics*, 1/1 (1996), 1-24.

⁸¹Abdul-Moneim Said, 'Europe 1992 and Its Economic and Technological Impacts on Arabs', *Arab Thought*, /666 (December 1991).p 111.

⁸²S.C. Calleya, *Evaluating Euro-Mediterranean Relations* (Taylor & Francis, 2005).P 1.

strongly linked. However, Abdul-Aziz Muhammad disagrees with the conflation of security issues with the military and police. A much wider definition of security, including economic, social and political considerations, is needed. Unemployment, corruption, the illegal drug trade, money laundering and terrorism are present among poor communities in the Mediterranean region. Failure to address these problems will adversely affect the prospects of security and sustainable growth between the Maghreb and Europe.⁸³ Another important and related dimension to this aspect of relations between the two regions is the sense of insecurity in Europe concerning the travelling of problems from the southern shores of the Mediterranean: notably illegal immigration, poverty and terrorism.⁸⁴

European countries have sought to strengthen their economies through securing further markets in which to sell their goods and services. Theodor Columbus and Thanos Veremi undertook a comparative analysis of the relations between the European and non-European countries of the Mediterranean Sea in the 1990s. Following the collapse of the USSR, the European Union began to develop its relations with countries in the southern Mediterranean. Bilateral agreements between the EU and individual North African countries were also accompanied by measures to improve relations with Turkey.⁸⁵ Abdul Hamid al-Ibrahimi argues that the formation of a 'Mediterranean Group' in 1995 was specifically designed by southern European states to serve European self-interests. Political and economic co-operation were chiefly aimed at tackling the problems of illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. Europe was to be made more secure in the face of the troubles coming from south of its maritime borders. Countries from the Maghreb are not considered full partners by their European counterparts. Further, these countries are not capable of integrating into a wider cooperative project. Instead, the Maghreb is viewed both as a promising market for European exports and of cheap imports, on the one hand, and a potential threat to Europe's interests. Accordingly, these countries should be contained in all aspects, so as to maintain Europe's security, prosperity and identity.⁸⁶

⁸³Abdul-Aziz Muhammad, 'Security and Development in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Implications on the Maghreb Countries', PhD Thesis, (Faculty of Law and Political Science; Tunisia, Tunisia. University of Tunisia Elmanar, 2007). p 2

⁸⁴Abdul-Salam al-Quojamiyah, 'Security Factor in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership 1995-2007', *MA Dissertation* (Political Science, Tripoli, Libya: , Academy of Graduate Studies, 2009).

⁸⁵Coulombis Theodor and Thanos Veremis, *The Foreign Policies of the European Union's Mediterranean States and Applicant Countries in the Context of Wider Eu Med Relations* (New York: St. Martin, S Press Inc, January 1999).

⁸⁶Abdul Hamid al-Ibrahimi, *The Arab Maghreb in Crossroads of the Global Changes* (1st edn.: Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1996). p.21.

Containment of the ever-increasing challenges that are faced by the Arab states on the southern shores of the Mediterranean have been taking place through active interaction with the new changes and developments in the northern portion of Europe.⁸⁷ The so-called Euro-Arab dialogue, frozen almost immediately after it began in the mid-1970s, was revived by these efforts from countries involved in this process. According to Abdul Fattah Rashdan, Arab and European perceptions of this dialogue appear to have differed. For Arab states, the easing of customs taxes and duties that are imposed on their products was crucial for economic co-operation and the opening up of European markets. These measures are necessary to create a competitive environment that is to the advantage of Arab products against those imported into the European Union from Eastern Europe. Moreover, Arab countries have shown an interest in promoting mutual political and security concerns. In contrast, the European Union has focused on security as the main issue in the dialogue with Arab countries. Issues like the control of illegal immigration and combatting illegal drugs, in the revived Euro-Arab dialogue.⁸⁸

The Euro-Arab dialogue and the other factors mentioned above have contributed to joint security strategies between European and the Maghrebi states. Several bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts have paved the way to implementing agreements in this area of inter-regional relations. Endorsement of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Barcelona in 1995, was an important stage on the path to fostering closer ties in the Mediterranean. For Stephen Calleya, the importance for participating countries in this partnership lay in its security and stability arrangements.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, it has achieved little success in dealing with certain issues, from armaments to human rights. Some of the North African countries, such as Algeria, consider these issues to be purely internal affairs and part of national sovereignty, objecting to what they perceive to be interference from the EU. For Abdul Fattah Rashdan, instructive lessons can be learned from the study of the Euro-Mediterranean project, without ignoring other alternatives.⁹⁰ In contrast, Eberhard Kienle argues that this partnership may have 'more negative than positive consequences for the prosperity and stability of the

⁸⁷al-Quojamiyah, 'Security Factor in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership 1995-2007'.op cit.

⁸⁸Abdul Fattah Rashdan, *Arabs and the European Union* (1st edn.: United Arab Emirates: Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies, 1998).

⁸⁹S.C. Calleya, *Evaluating Euro-Mediterranean Relations* op cit.,P 2.

⁹⁰Abdul Fattah Rashdan, *Arabs and the European Union*. Op cit.

countries concerned', due to the imposing of ideational elements by the "West" as a result of the imposition of economic liberalisation on the Maghreb.⁹¹

For scholars like Abdul-Aziz Muhammad, the Euro-Arab dialogue has served the crucial function of opening channels for bilateral agreements among individual Arab countries, on the one hand, and between these Arab countries and the European Union, on the other. Morocco and Tunisia have pursued this individual course without taking into account their immediate regional context. These agreements have raised some concerns about their content, consequences and effects in promoting balanced development and security for the Arab countries that are involved in them.⁹² Despite these concerns, the resultant restructuring of the economy has led to greater training opportunities for the labour force and the tackling of unemployment in society. Changes and reforms within North African countries have also benefitted Europe, especially in terms of controlling illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. However, Maghrebi-European bilateral agreements run the risk of increasing the dependency of 'developing' nations on the 'developed' ones. Rises in the quantity of European imports to Arab countries have happened at the expense of exports to the European Union. The European stance on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is specifically motivated by the further liberalisation of Arab markets for their manufactured goods and services. Local industrial activities in the Arab Maghrebi nations are thereby threatened with extinction as a result of the inability of Arab products to compete against European products in a fair economic climate.⁹³

Studies on the Arab Regional Blocs and Co-operation Among Arab Countries

Regional economic blocs in the Arab world, following the decline of the ideology which replaced the revolutionary vision of pan-Arabism, have encouraged scholars and researchers to study bilateral and regional co-operation. The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) were founded to co-ordinate economic, political, social and security interests among plural sovereign states. Analytical examinations of Arab regional

⁹¹Eberhard Kienle, 'Destablization through Partnership? Euro-Mediterranean Relations after the Barcelona Declaration', *Mediterranean Politics*, volume 3, issue 2 (1998). p 1-20.

⁹²Muhammad, 'Security and Development in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Implications for the Maghreb Countries'. op cit, p.7.

⁹³Ibid. p.14.

frameworks have been conducted. Emhamed al-Malki, for example, believes that co-operation and integration were among the main forces behind the involvement of all the parties in the Arab bilateral and regional blocs.⁹⁴ He compares the two experiences of the GCC and the AMU. The achievements and failures of these two loosely organised projects of integration are highlighted. Al-Maliki makes the claim that the success of any unitary and integrative project mainly depends on the clarity of its objectives, and the tactics used to achieve them, which are empirical. This requires the linking of all the variables, environments and tools that are relevant to the increasing of the feasibility of such unitary objectives. It also requires stable and well-established political entities, without the element of ideology, to pursue all of the steps towards unity and integration. This goal is usually achieved through a long-term strategy that gradually develops the necessary infrastructure. In other words, political integration initiatives should be based on gradual and careful measures, and on the relevant preparations at various levels.⁹⁵ al-Malki makes a central point about the Arab Maghreb and Arab Gulf unitary projects when he says that the two projects have not lacked the political determination to establish the possibility of joint co-operation among their members. Nevertheless, in both cases, each state wants to maintain its political sovereignty, while, at the same time, being part of the project of relative integration. The Arab Maghreb and the Arab Gulf Unions are not located in the political and economic environments needed to undertake meaningful and deep integration. Suitable political and economic environments are necessary to translate the political determination into the concrete actions that help to build active mechanisms to promote regional integration that benefits all members.⁹⁶

Opposing points of view are also present in the secondary sources. Ali Khalfi has argued that the political will among Arab elites and politicians remains weak, due to the espousal of different ideologies and they lack the ability to cope with persistent obstacles to unity. More interestingly, the countries in the Maghreb lack the foundations for political unity. For Khalfi, what divides these countries is greater than that which brings them together.⁹⁷ Bitter disagreements surround the structures and activities of the AMU. Abu Qasim al-Mabruk conducted a similar study of the Arab Maghreb Union with the aim of identifying the effects of pervasive political environments and factors in the AMU itself. He focuses on the

⁹⁴al-Malki, 'Critical Analysis of Arab Regional Political Federations', *Journal of Arab Future*. No 367, (Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2009) p171.

⁹⁵Ibid. p 172.

⁹⁶Ibid. p.172

⁹⁷Ali Khalfi, 'Major Economic Blocks: The European Union, with Reference to the Maghreb Union', *Scientific Magazine for Commercial Studies*, No 4 (Helwan University, 2008). p.183.

differences between political regimes, in terms of their forms, structures, philosophical ideologies and policies: monarchic rule in Morocco, republican rule in Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania, and rigid socialism in Libya. He also highlights border problems, such as the Great Desert Crisis between Algeria and Morocco. Moreover, the countries of the Arab Maghreb did not support Libya in its conflict with the Western countries in relation to the Lockerbie controversy. For instance, Morocco, a member of the UN Security Council at the time, abstained to vote in favour of UN resolution 748, which imposed sanctions on Libya. al-Mabruk thinks that Morocco could have opposed the resolution. Finally, al-Mabruk explains the effects of political factors on the Arab Maghreb Union's institutions. The failure of the Union Agreement is evident, especially in terms of the achievement of its proposed goals for the Union.⁹⁸

Apparent or hidden rivalries among the ruling regimes of the Maghreb, which subscribed to different ideologies, has been proposed as a cause for this failure. Stagnation has since afflicted the institutions of the AMU concerning the desire or ability to initiate regional aspirations and achievements for integration. Khalfi recommends that countries in the Maghreb ought to focus first on building bilateral relations between states, to create the right conditions for Arab unity.⁹⁹ Problems will inevitably emerge when states come together in regional Arab blocs for the purpose of integration. These problems vary from one regional union to another, depending on the economic, political, social and cultural factors that prevail in each society.¹⁰⁰ The position expressed by Khalfi on the necessity for political will in achieving integration, is compelling in the cases of regional or national unity. Nonetheless, political will is not an isolated dimension which would enable increased levels of political and economic co-operation among the states in the Maghreb.

Weaknesses in Arab regional unions also emanate from the economic crises, such as the generation of jobs that are able to absorb university graduates and that are a fertile ground for businesses. This situation may limit the prospects for Arab entrepreneurs and their products and services.¹⁰¹ In this respect, Hayder Murad has conducted research on the volume of economic co-operation and commercial exchange between Arab countries, in general, and the

⁹⁸Abu Qasim al-Mabruk, 'Effects of Political Factors on Arab Maghreb Union '. op cit pp. 31-32.

⁹⁹Khalfi, 'Major Economic Blocks: The European Union, with Reference to the Maghreb Union'. op cit, p.181.

¹⁰⁰Misbah al-N'ass , 'Arab Maghreb Union and Future Challenges', MA dissertation, (Politics Department .Tripoli, Libya: Academy for Higher Studies). p.65.

¹⁰¹Khalfi, 'Major Economic Blocks: The European Union, with Reference to the Maghreb Union'. op cit, p.185.

countries of the Arab Maghreb Union, in particular. His findings point to poor levels of co-operation among these countries, in spite of efforts to promote this co-operation. Murad provides some statistics to illustrate his research. For instance, the volume of Arab bilateral trade during the 1980s was between 7% and 8% of total Arab external trade. In 1999 and 2002, the volume of this trade was, respectively, (9.4%) and (9.5%). Murad provides further figures and data, which all show that joint Arab economic and commercial co-operation is very low. This situation is basically attributed to various problems involving Arab inter-relations.¹⁰²

Instability in the political environment, for Mustafa Khushaim, adversely affects the prospects for economic and trading ties between Arab countries. Two other factors also contribute to this low level of Arab co-operation. The first revolves around the fact that similar products and export structures are present in these countries. Secondly, fluctuations in Arab relations and modes of government inhibit the regular and smooth process of economic co-operation. For instance, Khushaim uses the Libyan-Tunisian relationship as a model of economic co-operation and achievement between Arab countries. Tunisia has always been Libya's main Arab economic partner, accounting for the majority of its exports to, and imports from, other Arab states. About 76% of Libyan Arab imports come from Tunisia. This demonstrates the centrality of economic co-operation between the two countries, and its effects on other aspects of their relationship. Mustafa Khushaim concludes that it is still crucial to build active bilateral and regional co-operative systems among Arab countries.¹⁰³

The increasing external debts of many Arab countries, and the consequent weakening and depletion of national budgets, according to Abdul Hamid al-Ibrahimi, have had a negative effect on their ability to co-operate with their neighbours.¹⁰⁴ In 1994, the World Bank reported that there had been an increase in the external debt of the Arab Maghreb countries if compared to their GNP. In Mauritania, for example, this debt increased from 125% in 1980, to 215% in 1996. In Morocco, in the same period, it increased from 53% to 80%, in Tunisia from 41% to 66%, and in Algeria from 47% to 70%.¹⁰⁵ This worrying increase in their

¹⁰²Hayder Murad, 'Obstacles Facing Growth of Bilateral Arab Trade', in *Proceedings of the Conference of inter-Arab trade and economic integration*, (University of Jordan, Amman, 20-22 September 2004) p.634

¹⁰³Khushaim, 'The Inter-Arab trade. From the political sensitivity to the digital gap :A case study of the Libyan foreign trade towards the Arab states.' op cit. pp 124-145.

¹⁰⁴ al-Ibrahimi, *The Arab Maghreb in Crossroads of the Global Changes*. op cit, p.21.

¹⁰⁵World Bank, 'World Development Report'. Report .(Oxford University Press, Oxford University, 1994).

external debts is considered to be an obstacle to economic growth in the Arab Maghreb countries. Seeking support from the World Bank has not only made this crisis worse. It has also deepened the dependency of the Arab nations of the Maghreb on external actors.¹⁰⁶

Critical evaluation of Arab projects' regional integration, including the AMU, GCC and Arab Co-operation Council (ACC), can lead to the identification of some small differences. Dramatic changes and events in the broader global context have accompanied the establishment of these projects. The USSR's collapse, and the end of the Cold War, witnessed the end of a bipolar system, which became a unipolar one with a dominant USA. Many Third World countries with left-wing governments became destabilised. A new international order was constructed, based on neo-liberal economics. Third World countries were forced to adapt to the new developments, thereby abandoning anti-imperialism for ideas compatible with the new system of norms, practices and institutions of unipolarity. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with a large number of Arab member states, was severely weakened.¹⁰⁷ Anwar al-Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977 later led to the Camp David Peace Agreement between Israel and Egypt, which was brokered by the USA. This action effected massive changes to the geopolitical dynamics of the Arab world. Egypt was no longer a primary frontline antagonist alongside other Arab states in the Arab-Israeli conflict, in a context where other wars raged, such as the Iraq-Iran War. In the region, the member states in these unions have not achieved the adequate levels of political maturity that are needed to build up and sustain national integrity.¹⁰⁸

Arab society, particularly the family, is identified as a key factor undermining social and political integration.¹⁰⁹ Loyalty is directed towards the tribal system and family connections, rather than towards the state itself. In this situation it is evidently difficult to build up viable regional unions and cooperative frameworks. The key to the success of a regional union is thus the existence of stable, well-established and integrative national states. However, al-Malki argues that Arab regional unitary projects could be successful in the future. This success will depend on strengthening the basic ideas of unity and regional integration at all

¹⁰⁶ al-Ibrahimi, *The Arab Maghreb in Crossroads of the Global Changes*. op cit, p.22.

¹⁰⁷ Kamal Sahbown, 'Effects of the Collapse of the USSR on Libyan Foreign Policy, 1990-2000', *MA Dissertation, (Political Science; Tripoli, Libya: Academy for Higher Studies, 2001)*. p.126.

¹⁰⁸ al-Malki, 'Critical Analysis of Arab Regional Political Federations'. op cit, p.179.

¹⁰⁹ Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1993), p.118.

levels, including the principles of democracy.¹¹⁰ Likewise, Ali Khalfi argues that states which succeed in establishing well-integrated unions can also achieve high standards of economic, diplomatic and military progress at the national level. The European Union is the most striking example of such models.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, Misbah al-N'ass warns that it is important to ensure that the Arab Maghreb Union and similar Arab regional blocs do not degenerate into non-nationalist regional federations. Regional federations may develop into political, geographical and demographic clusters that could undermine any other loyalty. It is true that a regional union might face challenges. However, such challenges will vary according to the political, cultural, economic and social situations of each society. al-N'ass argues that the Arab Maghreb Union is half-way between the national state and an Arab federation, but it is not a substitute for the latter. The Arab Maghreb Union goes beyond national geographical space to become a wider sphere that involves all the member states. This union joins several countries that share common features, but, at the same time, keep a place for the integrity of the nation state.¹¹²

Khalfi introduces the factor of the 'Leader State' into the analysis of the development of Arab integration. In the Maghreb, similarly to other regions in the Arab world, there is not a country which possesses the appropriate levels and skills of development to take a lead. The lack of a dynamic actor in the struggle for union is conspicuous. France and Germany have played such a role in the context of the European Union, to the benefit of other member states, for more than half a century. In the Arab case, Saudi Arabia has played a similar role in the relative success of GCC.¹¹³ On the other hand, the experiences of regional alliances raise questions at the levels of formal and public awareness and the will for the necessary conditions for making such alliances successful. Indicators of development and respect for human rights should be taken into account when considering requests for membership of a union.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰al-Malki, 'Critical Analysis of Arab Regional Political Federations'. op cit, p.199.

¹¹¹Khalfi, 'Major Economic Blocks: The European Union, with Reference to the Maghreb Union'.op cit, p.183.

¹¹² al-N'ass, Arab Maghreb Union and Future Challenges. op cit, p.52.

¹¹³Khalfi, 'Major Economic Blocks: The European Union, with Reference to the Maghreb Union'. op cit, p.180.

¹¹⁴Alnealy Mustafa, 'Requirements to Move from Co-operation to the State of Arab Integration :Case Study of the Arab Maghreb Union', *Journal of Arab Maghreb*. Tripoli., /6 (2008). p.167.

Studies on Libyan-Tunisian Relations

Foreign policy in the Maghreb appears to be characterised by a large degree of inconsistency at the bilateral, regional and global levels. Tunisia and Libya were key actors in this process of policy reversals. The political ideologies espoused by the ruling regime impacted on inter-state relations for much of the twentieth century. Khalid Hijazi conducted a study of the foreign policy of the countries of the AMU in the period following the Libyan revolution of 1969. In particular, he looked at Libyan initiatives to develop bilateral relations with the other states of the AMU. Although Libya tried to balance ideology and its political interests, ideology remained the most powerful force. Hijazi observes that disagreement, and sometimes conflict between Libya and other countries, both inside and outside the region, ultimately led the global superpowers to impose international sanctions on Libya. Being disappointed by the lukewarm reactions of the countries of the AMU towards the sanctions, Libya turned its foreign policy towards the central African countries. However, Hijazi concludes by saying that understanding the principles of Libyan foreign policy requires the highlighting of the following points: the organisational structure of Libyan foreign policy, especially after the establishment of what is known as the People's Authority in Libya, on 2nd March, 1977; the essential components of Libyan foreign policy, i.e., ideology, geographical location and oil; the powerful influence on foreign policy was the Libyan President, as Gaddafi insisted on being in charge of the formulation of Libyan foreign policy.¹¹⁵ The latter point demonstrates that the roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliament were insignificant. These bodies were, in theory, responsible for shaping Libya's external policy, but, in practice, they merely carried out the instructions of the President

Although Gaddafi's influence persisted in the direction of the Libyan regime, the role of ideology in foreign policy became less influential from the late 1980s. Kamila Othman has studied the dramatic changes that seized world politics at the end of the Cold War. The ideological conflict waged between the capitalist USA and the communist USSR, finally stopped. Accordingly, all countries, including Libya, started to rethink their foreign policies. Closer relations with Europe appeared to be a feasible option in Libya's broader regional and

¹¹⁵Khalid Hijazi, *The Maghreb Union and Libyan Foreign Policy: Balance between Interests and Principles* (1st edn.: Tripoli Centre Public Radios. Voice of Africa, 2008). pp.49-56.

global relations. The Libyan leadership concluded that developing Libyan-European relations would help to promote Libyan policy towards Africa.¹¹⁶

Greater focus in Libyan foreign policy towards Africa came after Libya failed to achieve its objectives in its relations with the Arab world. From the 1970s, Libya had experienced long periods of political isolation. For example, Libya was excluded from the Euro-Arab dialogue, due to ideological differences between Libya and the European Union. Political ideology, particularly pan-Arabism, was a major feature of Libyan state policy after 1969. Gaddafi played a personal role in this situation. Libya's attitude towards the Maghreb nations was reflected in joint agreements and relations. According to Khalid Hijazi, this ideological element conflicted with the interests and policies of other states in the region.¹¹⁷ For instance, Libyan-Tunisian relations deteriorated in 1980, after the events in Gafsa, with Libya threatening to use military force.¹¹⁸

Maurizio Cremasco suggests that the sharp tensions in Libyan-Tunisian relations during the Bourguiba era were due to the failure of the 1974 Djerba Agreement, which 'foresaw a union of Tunisia and Libya'.¹¹⁹ Bilateral relations between the two countries ranged from 'the quasi-normal to the very tense'.¹²⁰ For Cremasco, ideational factors drove Gaddafi's desire to change the Tunisian regime to expand the 'the anti-Western and anti-American front'.¹²¹ He goes on to argue that the Tunisian regime appeared to be substantially westernised and the declining appeal of ideologies such as nationalism, socialism and pan-Arabism in the Tunisian society in Tunisia played a role in the state of poor relations between the two countries when Bourguiba was in power. In the case of Libya, Cremasco argues that the Libyan foreign policy after 1969 was influenced on three main ideological axes: pan-

¹¹⁶Kamila Othman, *Libyan Foreign Policy and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership 1990-1998*. (Academy publishing House. 1st edn. Tripoli, Libya). p.262.

¹¹⁷Hijazi, *The Maghreb Union and Libyan Foreign Policy: Balance between Interests and Principles*. op cit, p.18.

¹¹⁸ Gafsa is a small town in South West Tunisia. Some militants attacked Tunisian security centres in the town in an attempt to destabilise the Tunisian government. After being arrested, some of the militants admitted that the Libyan government was behind this attack. Moreover, it provided them with a variety of logistic support and training in order to launch the raid on Gafsa. However, some other sources blame Algeria for the incidents at Gafsa.

¹¹⁹Maurizio Cremasco, 'Two Uncertain Futures: Tunisia and Libya', *Adelphi Papers*, 28/231 (1988), 41-60.P 45.

¹²⁰Ibid p45

¹²¹Ibid p 45

Arabism, anti-imperialism and Gaddafi's doctrine, laid down in the Green Book, which informed Libyan-Tunisian relations.¹²²

Similarly, Clyde R. Mark argues that ideological factors influenced Libyan foreign policy towards Tunisia until Ben Ali came to power in 1987.¹²³ Moreover, for Fred Halliday, the coming of Ben Ali to power in 1987 mitigated the tension with Libya because of the modernising project that was adopted by the Ben Ali regime. This project intended to strengthen the Tunisian state and sought to transform the country in order to bring it closer to its neighbours, especially Libya.¹²⁴ However, Ali Girbaal argues that the development of Libyan-Tunisian relations can be attributed to the forging of personal relations between Ben Ali and Gaddafi, and the emergence of a new moderate elite that bridged the gap between the two counties.¹²⁵

Western powers were angered by the ideological policies of Libya that lead to a threat to their interests in Africa and the Mediterranean. An obvious gulf existed between this North African state and external actors during the Cold War period. The Lockerbie problem and its consequences further widened this gulf. While Libya was subject to international isolation, the remaining countries in the Maghreb experienced improvements in their relations with Europe. These changes encouraged Libya to take a more open approach to Europe.¹²⁶

The development of Libyan-European co-operation requires Libya to make a balance between political realities and political philosophy. This is because Libya's policies in Africa may conflict with some European interests on the African continent. Additionally, troubles in the US-Libyan relationship might hamper Libyan approaches to Europe. These circumstances have finally made Libya accept the European project for security in the Mediterranean Sea, which takes into consideration the non-military nature of potential co-operation in the region. Libyan co-operation is equally important for Europe, because Libya's coastline on the

¹²²Ibid p 48

¹²³ Clyde R Mark, 'Libya: Current Overview of Issues', *Libya: Current Issues and Historical Background* New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc, (2003).

¹²⁴Fred Halliday, 'Tunisia's Uncertain Future', *Middle East Report*, NO 163, Mar -apr (1990), p.25-27.

¹²⁵Ali Girbaal, *Libyan Tunisian Relations .MA Dissertation*, (Arab Research and Studies Institute) Department of Political Studies.Cairo, 2012) p 7

¹²⁶ Othman, *Libyan Foreign Policy and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership 1990-1998*.op cit, pp.233-38.

Mediterranean is about 2000 KMs. long, making it essential for Europeans and Libyans to work together to combat secret and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe.¹²⁷

Conclusion

The Libyan-Tunisian relationship appears to have developed in multilateral contexts, according to the literature viewed above. The effects of these contexts between Libya and Tunisia were instrumental on the course of political and economic relations. Increasingly closer ties between the European Union and the Maghreb brought many opportunities for co-operation across the Mediterranean Sea. European desires for a partnership with Maghrebi countries accelerated diplomatic endeavours to redefine the relationship between the two countries. The inter-regional initiatives and the projects that aimed to increase the partnership with the Maghrebi countries helped to mitigate the influence of ideology in informing the Libyan-Tunisian relations. These efforts came after the end of the Cold War, when ideology was a driving force in international relations. The collapse of the USSR assisted in the decline of ideology informing Libyan-Tunisian relations. Most of the studies that focus on projects seeking to build partnerships between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean emphasised mutual interests in multifaceted aspects that could serve the stability and security of the Mediterranean region. Free trade areas and co-operation in political and security matters were prominent agendas that were discussed and agreed upon by decision-makers from Europe and the Maghreb. These studies show the extent on which the influence of ideology declined in the information of the multilateral relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The decline of ideology, along with popular awareness in society, are part of the essential elements that, overall, must be considered in examining the efforts to transform the state of co-operation into integration amongst the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union.

On the intra-relations between the Maghreb countries, studies show how ideology and differences in political beliefs contributed heavily to the state of poor relations between these countries. Abu Qasim al-Mabruk has paid special attention to the differences in the political regimes in this region. A twofold context was created that was based on the ideology of pan-Arabism and socialism, and the differences in their ruling regimes in the adoption of different ideological models. Political ineffectiveness within the structures and actions of the AMU

¹²⁷Ibid. pp. 261-265.

was clearly apparent. In addition, the decline of ideology played a role in the emergence of Arab economic blocs that emphasised mutual economic benefits among a set of plural sovereign countries, such as the GCC. The failure of these ideological projects led to improvements on a bilateral level between the individual countries of the Maghreb.

Libyan-Tunisian relations witnessed heightened tensions during the Bourguiba era in Tunisia, where differences in ideology and the regime played a key role in the deterioration of relations between the two countries. Studies on this matter show that when Bourguiba was in power, Libyan-Tunisian relations were beset by crises created by the role of ideology, leading to the collapse of the political union between the countries and to the Gafsa crisis. While Khalid Hijazi argues that Gafsa was instrumental in the deterioration of these relations, Maurizio Cremasco contends that the failure of the Djerba Agreement to effect political unity was the cause instead. At the end of the 1980s, relations between the two countries improved with the coming of Ben Ali to power after the ousting of Bourguiba. Changes in the personnel of the regime reduced the influence of sweeping ideological claims in defining the mood of Libyan-Tunisian relations. Ben Ali's neo-liberal reforms created the incentive to open Tunisia's borders to Libya, while the latter country was looking to break out of the international isolation imposed by the West.

The review of previous studies in this chapter demonstrates that there is a shortage of relevant studies on Libyan-Tunisian relations from 1969 until 2010. Particular focus by researchers on the greater levels of economic and political co-operation between 1987 and 2010 does not seem to exist. Political discourses around Libyan-Tunisian relations, have unfortunately not received the attention they deserve from those who study politics or foreign policy. Some researchers have attributed this deficiency to the absence of a free academic atmosphere that would allow scholars to critically study the inter-state relations of Tunisia and Libya.¹²⁸

¹²⁸al-Mabruk, 'Effects of Political Factors on Arab Maghreb Union'. op cit, p.86.

CHAPTER THREE: RESISTANCE IN THE COLONIAL MAGHREB AND THE ARRIVAL OF INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

The Maghreb experienced a series of radical transformations from the early nineteenth century until the present. Particular factors rooted in this region have interacted with external events or processes. Socio-economic relations occurred in a context of successive Muslim rulers based in North Africa. While Ottoman sovereignty tilted the centre of power towards Istanbul, local political elites enjoyed a large measure of autonomy in internal matters. Nearly three centuries of Ottoman rule had made a strong impact on North Africa. The age of pashas and beys was very much alive. European colonialism entered the Maghreb in 1830, and it introduced a new set of factors which can still be felt today. As a result, the current nation-state system in the region, and throughout the Arab world, is a direct product of colonial invasions and administrations over the last two centuries. This chapter, which is divided into five parts, will examine the period from the beginning of colonialism until the period immediately after Tunisian and Libyan independence.

Part one will identify the beginning of colonialism in the Maghreb. Growing European power was felt from across the Mediterranean. Intense rivalries among the states of Europe threatened to pull the North African provinces of the Ottoman Empire into conflicts taking place on the continent. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt triggered such a power struggle. This part will examine the Italian conquest of the Ottoman provinces of Fezzan, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. British acceptance of this conquest will also be explained with reference to its rivalry with France.

Part two begins with the examination of the Ottoman-tribal dynamic, prior to its disruption. Libyan tribesmen were part of the state in ways which indicated their carefully protected autonomy from the interference of the central authorities. For Ibn Khaldun, the renowned medieval scholar of Islamic history, tribes were united or divided according to the strength of group solidarity or '*asabiyya*', underpinned by religion, maintaining internal stability and

creating external opportunities for political co-operation or growth.¹²⁹ However, the Italian invasion of 1911 attempted to control and repress the longstanding informal and formal ties between the Ottomans and the local tribes, and which recognised the sovereignty of the former and the freedom of the latter. I will look at how the tribal nature of Libyan society enabled many to flee from the brutal actions of the Italian troops. Social integration and access to institutions of education were relatively unproblematic for Libyans immigrants. Libyan resistance to Italian colonialism found expression in armed uprisings. I will examine in part three this aspect of the reactions of the inhabitants of Libya to the presence of a foreign occupation. Tunisia served as an important conduit for the flow of weapons from the Ottoman Empire to the Libyan fighters resisting this new imposition. Simultaneous revolts in both colonial Tunisia and Libya appear to indicate cross-border activities waged by resistance groups as they moved from one colony to the other. I will examine the examples of the Libyan, Khalifah Ben Asker, and the Tunisian fellagha (fighter), Mohammad Daghbaji.

Part four examines the rise of anti-colonial literature that aimed to provoke the colonial subjects of Tunisia and, in the Maghreb, to defeat colonialism. A campaign of civil disobedience appears to be its main feature. Newspapers were instrumental in spreading the ideas of anti-colonial writers, journalists and intellectuals. The Young Tunisians was founded, based on the objective of getting rid of colonialism, and its members included Tunisians, Libyans and Moroccans. Further, the formation of the Republic of North Africa was the culmination of its activities.

Part five examines the era of independence, as Tunisia and Libya became formal nation-states in their own right. While a republican system was introduced in Tunisia, led by Habib Bourguiba, the three provinces of Libya were united under a monarchy. Both countries appear to have pursued a neutral policy concerning the radical politics of their eastern neighbours. A rivalry developed between Bourguiba and Jamal Abdul Nasser, complemented by strong ideological differences about how to deal with the problems of the Arab world.

¹²⁹ Ira M. Lapidus, "Tribes and State Formation in Islamic History," in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999), p. 28-29.

The Beginning of Colonialism

Europe's influence in the Middle East increased markedly from the early nineteenth century. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 introduced a new dynamic into the region. The previous Ottoman rule was challenged, and it was severely weakened in the Arab provinces of its empire. Furthermore, a plan was formulated by Napoleon for an invasion of Algiers, which was not carried out until after his reign in 1830.¹³⁰ Expanding European power was felt across the world. Their political and economic interests were increasingly perceived to be tied to the acquisition of new import and export markets through colonialism. Ottoman control of its Arab territories was thus rapidly eroding, with colonial actors interfering directly in a variety of ways, eventually leading to formal annexation. Colonialism in North Africa was a complex process involving many factors which witnessed the occupation of foreign armies and the reaction of native resistance. France, Britain, Spain and Italy adopted their own style of colonial policies and acquired territories in North Africa. Previous rulers were either overthrown or were subjected to the dictates of the representative of the colonial power.

The post-Napoleonic North Africa experienced successive waves of imperialism from the early nineteenth until the middle of the twentieth centuries. The initial plan to invade Algeria finally occurred in 1830 through a diplomatic crisis that was manufactured by the French, implicating the Ottoman governor of Algiers. Tunisia was declared a French protectorate in 1881. Political agitation by native officers in the Egyptian army, known as the Urabi revolt, led to British military intervention and the establishment of Egypt as a protectorate. Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, Italy had seized the Libyan provinces of Fezzan, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, thereby forcing the Ottomans to finally cede these territories. The failure of Italian colonial policy to take control of Tunisia led to increasing attention on Libya.¹³¹

Despite the apparent differences and ongoing disputes among European states about the unfolding of the colonisation of the Ottoman Arab provinces, they were unanimous in their support of the Italian campaign to occupy Libya. Britain and France, in light of similar invasions of Egypt and Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, respectively, consented to the

¹³⁰ Benjamin Claude Brower, "Just War and Jihad in the French Conquest of Algeria", Sohail H. Hashemi (ed.), *Just Wars, Holy Wars and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim encounters and exchanges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 222.

¹³¹ Mohammad Abdul-Karim Al-Wafi, *The Road to Lausanne* (1st edn.: Tripoli: Firjani Publishers, 1977). p.50.

ambitions of Italy. Notably, the British had encouraged Italy to enter North Africa to balance French colonial designs on Libya. Further, Britain did not wish to share the border of its protectorate over Egypt with France. A barrier was to be created between its colonies in the east and the French control of the western regions of North Africa.¹³² Additionally, British calculations of the relative weakness of the Italians shaped their perception of the need to bring in a lesser threat to its interests. This policy followed the advice of Cooper, a British traveller, that Britain ought to undermine French colonial plans for Tripolitania through another, yet weaker, colonial actor, after the removal of Ottoman rule.¹³³

For Khalifah Atlelisi, the motivations behind Italian colonial designs on Libya were due to its desire to join the colonial rivalry between France and Britain over the territories of the Ottoman Empire; to secure a foothold on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and to claim the responsibility of being a civilising agent seeking to modernise other peoples.¹³⁴ Italy thus sent a warning to the Ottoman Empire on 27th September, 1911, which expressed its intention to occupy the Ottoman's Libyan territories. Ottoman rejection of the aforementioned warning led to a declaration of war by Italy, accompanied by attacks on the coastal cities of Libya on 29th September, 1911.¹³⁵ Italian control soon extended into the interior.

In the Muslim world, the Italian occupation of Libya provoked hostility. Arab groups and individuals, especially in neighbouring Tunisia, threw their support behind the resistance movements in Libya, from fighters to financial assistance to equipment.¹³⁶ French tolerance of this cross-border activity was mainly prompted by the fear that Tunisians might themselves rise up following the battle of al-Jallaz. The mood in Paris concerning colonial North Africa can be discerned from the reports of a French journalist who was observing,

However, the joint Libyan-Tunisian borders are very long, which means it is impossible to protect them fully. In addition, both the Libyans and Tunisians do

¹³²George Joffe, 'Libya and Europe', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 6/4 (2001), 75-92.

¹³³Ali al-Bousiri, *Libyan Jihad Movement 1911-18, Continuous Contacts with Freedom Fighters in Tunisia and Algeria*, (2; Tunisian High Institute on the History of the National Movement, University of Manobah, 2006). p.470.

¹³⁴Khalifah Atlelisi, *Lexicography of Arab Libyan Jihad* (Beirut: Culture House, 1973).p20.

¹³⁵Ali Omer Alhazel, 'Sources of Supply for Libyan Jihad Movement 1911-12', (an annual periodical published by the Centre for Libyan Jihad Against the Italian Invasion 2008). p.36.

¹³⁶Mohammad al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution* (1st edn.: Libya: Arab Book House, 1975). p.27.

not consider these borders to be present. Likewise, there is no international law that prohibits trading among neighbouring tribes. The Libyan and Tunisian tribes have very strong and old blood, social and trade relations, which are impossible to break. Accordingly, it was not only impossible but also dangerous for France to restrict traditional relations that link close Arab tribes.¹³⁷

This recognition of the common bonds of tribes across French Tunisia and Italian Libya indicates the limits of the power and will of the colonial administration, even on matters of military resistance. However, the approach was subject to inconsistencies. Regular French armed encounters with Tunisian fighters transporting supplies from one side of the border to the other took place.¹³⁸

Cross-border exchanges were not only military in nature, but also attest to the trading of goods. In this contested situation, Libyans and the Italian colonial authorities vied for control of the borders. A large influx of Tunisian products found their way into Tripolitania. During the first few months of the Italian invasion of Libya, Tunisian exports had multiplied to three times what they had previously been. The amount of Tunisian exports, according to reports by the Civil Observance Council in Gabes, had increased from 6,000 tons in September, 1911, to 24,000 tons in January, 1912. Closure of other trading channels, especially the sea ports, stimulated the process of supply from the French colonial possession, Tunisia, to its eastern neighbours.¹³⁹

Various interactions between Tunisia and Libya influenced the nature and direction of native resistance in the latter. The Italian colonial administration was determined to suppress the flow of arms, fighters and resources from Tunisia. Tribal and social relations between the colonial subjects of territories were to be policed and limited. This policy, however, was not successful, as can be confirmed by the emergence of numerous Tunisian movements dedicated to resistance by the inhabitants of colonial Libya against the Italians. Popular support, in a variety of ways, was forthcoming for the anti-colonial struggle waged by the

¹³⁷al-Bousiri, *Libyan Jihad Movement 1911-18, Continuous Contacts with Freedom Fighters in Tunisia and Algeria*. op cit, p.477.

¹³⁸al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit, p.27.

¹³⁹ The French High Commissioner in Tunisia, 'Increased Tunisian exports to the Tripoli mandate because of the Italian occupation', Report .The French High Commissioner in Tunisia (ed), August 1912.The Centre of Libyan Jihad Against the Italian Invasion ,Tripoli, Libya.

Libyan resistance. The territorial displacements of many Libyan tribes to the southern regions of Tunisia contributed further to the moral and concrete assistance between borders. Against this background of mutual exchange, resistance movements in Tunisia and Libya were motivated, in part, by a tribal dynamic which had little or no patience with colonial borders. Ongoing recruitment of fighters against the French and Italian colonial occupations, on both sides of the border, increased after the outbreak of the First World War.¹⁴⁰

Formal Colonial Borders and Informal Tribal Ties

The colonial period brought about many changes to the territories of North Africa. Ottoman rule granted a large measure of autonomy to local governors on the coastline. Further, the interior was not subject to direct administration. However, the relations between Ottoman officials in the major cities and tribal leaders in the countryside were conducted against the background of a balance of interests. A mutually reinforcing relationship existed. Law and order alongside education, among other services, from the Ottomans, was complemented by the participation of Libyans in local government and administration.¹⁴¹ Colonial rule changed this context with greater emphasis on bringing the natives into the repressive embrace of a foreign army and bureaucracy. To what extent had tribal relations participated in the resistance movements in Libya and Tunisia? What were the primary characteristics of relations between the colonial subjects in both countries? Popular resistance at the beginning of foreign occupation in Libya and Tunisia appears to show tribal and social support taking the form of cross-border interactions. These borders were considered to be imposed by illegitimate and foreign rulers, at first, followed by the attitude that they were nothing other than mere formalities, which could be ignored.

Libyan tribesmen and groups gave their support to the resistance against the French colonial occupying Tunisia from 1881. Coordination for the anti-colonial struggle primarily took place between the western regions of Libya and southern Tunisia.¹⁴² Common social structures brought a high degree of co-ordinated relations between the colonial Libyan-

¹⁴⁰Samir al-Bakoush, ' *Italian Intervention in Tripoli and its Effects.*', (High Institute for National Resistance Movement. Manobah University, 1989).p 451.

¹⁴¹ Lisa Anderson, "Tribe and State: Libyan Anomalies", in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1990), p. 292.

¹⁴²Ibraheem Abu Qasim, *Libyan Immigrants in Tunisia 1911-1957* (1st edn.; Tunisia: Abdul-Karim Firm for Publishing, 1992) p 127.

Tunisian borders. During times of peace and war, the exchange of goods, people and ideas persisted. Importantly, shared religion, culture and language were reinforced by marriage ties. Tribal communities had grown and developed around the binding of social bonds that were based on bringing together different families, or on deepening the connections between existing ones. Members of a single family and clan can be found on both the Libyan and Tunisian sides of the border.¹⁴³ Tribal solidarity thus provided the sense of shared tribal origins or interests.

Thomas Barfield observes the key tendency of tribal groups to sustain "social and political cohesion in opposition to state rule", counting the Bedouin tribes of Libya in his list.¹⁴⁴ State-building efforts were either driven by tribes, such as the case of the short-lived Libyan Kingdom of King Idris I, the leader of the Senoussiyya brotherhood, to be discussed later, or they remained a constant presence in the calculations of governments. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Senoussiyya was present throughout the Sahara desert. It was founded by a pilgrim returning from Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz, who preached the return to a simple and uncorrupted form of Islam. Most members of the Senoussiyya were recruited from the tribesmen of Libyan Desert. However, the brotherhood's attention shifted from matters of religious ritual to politics, as they first challenged the hegemony of the French in modern-day Chad, and then targeted Italian troops after 1911.¹⁴⁵ In colonial Libya, the tribal structure continued to generate resistance to foreign-imposed political centres.

Tunisia provided a natural refuge for those fleeing the harsh policies of Italian colonial rule. Several waves of immigration occurred from Libya into Tunisia in this period. By the end of the first year of Italian occupation, 20,000 Libyans had left their homeland. The next wave, at the end of 1913, numbered 35,000 immigrants. Security and work opportunities drove many to abandon the deterioration resulting from the policies caused by the Italian occupation. Local farming and trade were two such fields of employment for these Libyans, alongside the phosphate industries.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³Ali Hasan, *Pages from Our National Struggle* (2nd. edn.: Tripoli: Alfikr Publishing House, 1974). p.138.

¹⁴⁴Thomas J. Barfield, "Tribe and State Relations: The Inner Asian Perspective", in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999) p. 153.

¹⁴⁵ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 99.

¹⁴⁶al-Bakoush, ' *Italian Intervention in Tripoli and its Effects*' op cit, p452.

Academic instruction in Arabic, which had suffered enormously in Libya due to Italian efforts, was also a factor in making the journey across the border. The medieval madrasah at Zaitouna was one institution which hosted Libyan religious students and scholars, thereby giving them the opportunity to integrate into a Tunisian society in the making.¹⁴⁷ The various difficulties experienced by Libyan immigrants did not stop them from settling down in the wider community among the Tunisians. Indications show mass immigration caused no serious problems between the subject populations of colonial Tunisia and Libya.¹⁴⁸ The opposite appears to be case, with the membership of Libyan and Tunisian workers in the Tunisian Labour Trade Union and the defence of the rights of the labour force in the face of the strict policies of the French colonial administration that targeted workers, united Libyan immigrants with their Tunisian counterparts.

Libyan Resistance and Ottoman Support

The Ottoman Empire was caught in a complicated web of relations involving European colonial powers. Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan were considered provinces in urgent need of the restoration of Ottoman rule. Libyan resistance to colonialism was supported through generous financial assistance, mainly directed to buttressing soldiers to defend the key city of Tripoli.¹⁴⁹ Close coordination between the Ottoman government in Istanbul and resistance fighters was urged by Nash'at Basha, the last Ottoman governor of Libya, against the occupation of the territory. In November, 1912, 150,000 Ottoman Lira were given to these fighters.¹⁵⁰ Additional financial aid of 85,000 Lira arrived to reinforce the existing efforts against the Italians.¹⁵¹ A broader plan to repel the invasion of the North African provinces under Ottoman sovereignty also involved other dimensions. Importantly, military help was also forthcoming. Ships, such as the 'Adernah', made their way to the region, containing weapons and other supplies.¹⁵² The conflict, putting Italian troops on one side and anti-colonial fighters on the other, thus stimulated a growing arms trade between Libya and Tunisia. However, several ships in route to Libya via Tunisia were impounded. One

¹⁴⁷ Fathi Al-Yaseer, Khalifah Bin Asker: *Bibliography of a Secret Leader* (1st edn.: Tunisia: Sirsina Centre for Mediterranean Studies, 2001). p.109.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p.109.

¹⁴⁹ Alhazel, 'Sources of Supply for the Libyan Jihad Movement 1911-12'. op cit, p.37.

¹⁵⁰ Griefnitsh, *History of Libyan Italian War*, trans. Imad-Addin Ghanim (3rd. edn.: Tripoli: Forthcoming Publication, 2006). p.53

¹⁵¹ Alhazel, 'Sources of Supply for Libyan Jihad Movement 1911-12. ' op cit, p.37.

¹⁵² Ali Mustafa Al-Misrati, *Social & Historical Relations between Libya and Turkey* (Tripoli: High Commission for Arts and Literature, the Libyan Book, 1969). p.85.

unsuccessful Ottoman attempt to arm Libyan fighters by sea saw the capture of the 'Odessa' on 1st September, 1912.¹⁵³ Greatly needed military supplies continued to be sent by the Ottomans until the ceding of Libya to Italy in the O'Shea Treaty, which was signed at Lausanne.¹⁵⁴

European acceptance of Italian control of Libya was soon followed by the invasion of the desert interior of its new colony. Fezzan was finally conquered on 12th August, 1914. However, Italian rule in the province was short-lived in the face of intense resistance. Local anti-colonial forces, joined by fighters from other parts of Libya, had managed to defeat Italian forces at the battle of al-Qardabiyah on 29th April, 1915. Subsequently, colonial control retreated and was more or less limited to the coastal cities.

Libyan success against Italy on the battlefield was accompanied by an anti-colonial revolt in neighbouring Tunisia. The simultaneous waging of these two campaigns of native resistance in the separate colonies strengthened co-operation between fighters on both sides of the colonial boundary. While Italy had joined the Allied camp, the Ottoman Empire agreed to support Imperial Germany. Against this background, Khalifah Ben Asker, a prominent resistance leader, was prompted to launch several attacks that sought to drive Italian forces from the countryside. The Ottomans sought to exploit the situation in its former provinces to their own advantage during the war.¹⁵⁵

Knowledge of the environment and geography of the shared Libyan-Tunisian border regions was utilised by Tunisian colonial subjects to aid Libyan resistance fighters.¹⁵⁶ I noted, in an earlier section, that the existence of solidarity brought about a sense of shared tribal origins or interests. This created a context where informal cultural, political, economic and social ties cut across the formal structures of colonial power. French and Italian imposed borders, bureaucracies and policing failed, to some extent, to curb the political consequences of the solidarity between their native subjects.

¹⁵³al-Bakoush, ' *Italian Intervention in Tripoli and its Effects*' op cit, p454.

¹⁵⁴This treaty was between the Kingdom of Italy and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). It was signed after the war between Turkey and Italy (1911-1912). In the Chateau d'Ouchy in Ouchy (a suburb of Lausanne), Switzerland, after negotiations that lasted from 3rd to 18th Oct., 1912. Based on this treaty, the Ottoman Empire withdrew from Libya, leaving the Libyan people to resist the forces of Italy.

¹⁵⁵ Ali Mustafa Al-Misrati, *Social & Historical Relations between Libya and Turkey*. op cit, p.85.p.480.

¹⁵⁶al-Bakoush, ' *Italian Intervention in Tripoli and its Effects*' op cit, p.478-80.

The battle of al-Jallaz, in Tunisia, involved Libyans and Tunisians against French colonial troops on 7th November 1911.¹⁵⁷ A 'Unity of Destiny' between the native inhabitants of the colonies in North Africa, particularly Tunisia and Libya, is perceived to have manifested itself.¹⁵⁸ Cross-border activities continued to facilitate the flow of goods, weapons and people in both directions, which was especially evident during the colonial period.¹⁵⁹

Fighters recruited from Tunisia had joined the resistance, led by Khalifah Ben Asker, which was being waged against the Italian colonial occupation.¹⁶⁰ Mohammad Daghbaji, a former Tunisian officer in the French army, had deserted his position to join the anti-colonial struggle. He led a campaign of militant agitation, earning a reputation as a *fellagha*, against the colonial authorities in Tunisia, from Libya. However, Daghbaji was caught by the Italians, who then handed him over to the French, which led to his execution on 1st March, 1924.¹⁶¹

A set of factors appears to have given rise to the resistance efforts of individuals, such as Khalifah Ben Asker, in the colonial Maghreb. Liberation from colonialism, socio-economic displacement, military, social and moral support from neighbouring states and the Ottomans, the imprisonment and torture of tribal members, such as Khalifah Ben Asker, contributed to a complex situation with high levels of discontent.¹⁶² An informal tribal will, expressed as solidarity across colonial borders, continually frustrated the asymmetric balance of power between the European colonial armies and native fighters.

The disruption of the traditional economy of the provinces in Libya resulted from the Italian attempt to wrest control from the Ottomans. Severe obstacles to the carrying out of the normal activities of trading and the earning of a livelihood, emerged. Subsequently, the Libyan population experienced increasing levels of poverty. The western hilly areas, and the area of Nalut, suffered most from this situation. France also closed the border between its

¹⁵⁷al-Jallaz refers to the location of a cemetery in the capital city of Tunisia, where a severe battle took place against the French occupation authorities, using knives.

¹⁵⁸al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit, p.28.

¹⁵⁹Mohammad Lutfi Al-Misri, *History of the Tripoli War*. (1st edn.: Cairo: Farouq Publishing House, 1975). p. 113.

¹⁶⁰Khalifah bin Asker was one of the main Libyan freedom leaders who fought against the Italian and French occupation in Libya and Tunisia. For more details on this issue, see Al-Yaseer, *Khalifah Bin Asker: Biography of a Secret Leader*. op cit.

¹⁶¹al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit, p.78.

¹⁶²Al-Yaseer, *Khalifah Bin Asker: Bibliography of a Secret Leader*. op cit, p.151.

colony and the areas being attacked by the Italian army. Those Libyans who directly took part in the cross-border trade thus lost their main and only source of income.¹⁶³

Southern Tunisia was increasingly vulnerable to anti-colonial agitation, particularly, to infiltration by fighters through the border, which was perceived to pose a danger after Italian troops were expelled from the area.¹⁶⁴ Increased political agitation on both sides of the colonial boundary was a source of concern for the French colonial authorities, as it was thought that it might lead to a popular uprising against French colonialism in the Arab Maghreb.¹⁶⁵ Tribes from the south of Tunisia did participate in campaigns of resistance that led to some major victories over the colonial forces in both Libya and Tunisia.¹⁶⁶ In colonial Tunisia, the Tataouine Military French Centre was among the targets. Battles were fought between resistance groups and their tribal supporters against the French troops, such as the battle of Dehiba I, in September, 1915, Dehiba II in January, 1916, Um Suwaigh II in October, 1915, and Ramada in October, 1916.¹⁶⁷

Tribal and resistance leaders, like Khalifah Ben Asker, were able to win battles against the French.¹⁶⁸ These victorious occasions encouraged anti-colonial fighters from Italian Libya and French Tunisia to co-operate to realise a common cause: the end of colonialism. Tribes, such as the Makhalbah, Dehibat and Tari'efah, played a key role in expanding these activities and later formed the core of the Tunisian resistance movement.¹⁶⁹ The co-ordination between the leaders of the resistance, reinforced by tribal solidarity on the different sides of the colonial border, proved to be instrumental in harassing French troops. This situation led the French field officer, Trestournel, to withdraw from Dehiba and to stay in Tataouine.¹⁷⁰ Anti-colonial sentiments were running high against French and Italian colonialism. The Ottoman religious authority also made its position clear on this matter: the struggle to expel the colonialists was a religious duty. The former rulers of the Maghreb used the notion of the head of state of the

¹⁶³Ibid. p.146.

¹⁶⁴Al-Yaseer, *Khalifah Bin Asker: Bibliography of a Secret Leader*. op cit, p.152.

¹⁶⁵ Letter of French Consul, Jousselin, in Tripoli to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Delcasse, 8th December, 1914. The Centre for Libyan Jihad Against the Italian Invasion.

¹⁶⁶Ibid. p.151.

¹⁶⁷ For more details on these battles see al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Yaseer, *Khalifah Bin Asker: Bibliography of a Secret Leader*. op cit, p.152.

¹⁶⁹al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit, p.39.

¹⁷⁰Al-Yaseer, *Khalifah Bin Asker: Bibliography of a Secret Leader*. op cit, p.160.

Ottoman Empire as the caliph to mobilise Muslims, especially in North Africa, to revolt against its enemies during the First World War.¹⁷¹

The Battle for Hearts and Minds: The Republic of North Africa

Resistance to colonialism was not restricted to the sphere of armed acts that sought to undermine the physical dimensions of French and Italian domination in the Maghreb. The battle for the hearts and minds of the colonial subjects of this region was just as urgent. A rapidly growing anti-colonial literature had emerged. Newspapers provided one of the most effective forums in which to express discontent and anger with the imposition of colonialism in Tunisia and Libya. In this form of print media, the calls for peaceful demonstrations and workers' strikes were made as an expression of hostility to foreign occupation.¹⁷² Social, political and economic tensions caused by the First World War created an environment that was ripe for popular mobilisation. Encouraged by journalists, writers and intellectuals, the colonial subjects of Tunisia and Libya began campaigns of civil disobedience against the French and Italian administrations in their countries.¹⁷³

During the early twentieth century, one of the leading protagonists of this push for the end of colonial domination was Abdul-Aziz Tha'albi in. Tha'albi was joined by other activists, who arrived at conclusions on the painful awareness of the imminent collapse of the Ottoman, and that the lands of the Muslims and Arabs were objects of European colonial ambitions.¹⁷⁴ Consequently, the Young Tunisians was founded in 1907 by Tha'albi and Ali Basha Hanyeh. Islamic and nationalist grounds were given by this movement against the Italian occupation of Libya in 1911. Activists and thinkers from the Maghreb, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco, had joined the Young Tunisians. Its appeal cut across national boundaries, originally imposed by the colonial powers, with its emphasis on political unity. The idea of the Republic of North Africa, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to Libya's eastern border with Egypt, was a key objective. Senior leaders of this group, who adopted this idea, included Tha'albi, Ali Basha Hanyeh, Saleh Sharif and Sheikh Safayhi.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit, p.37.

¹⁷²Al-Yaseer, *Khalifah Bin Asker: Bibliography of a Secret Leader*. op cit p.7.

¹⁷³al-Bakoush, 'Italian Intervention in Tripoli and its Effects', op cit. p.460.

¹⁷⁴Saeed al-Safi, *Bourguiba: A Semi Prohibited Biography* (2nd edn.: Beirut: Riyadh Rayyes Publishers, 2000). p.51.

¹⁷⁵al-Bakoush, 'Italian Intervention in Tripoli and its Effects', op cit. See also al-Safi, *Bourguiba: A Semi Prohibited Biography*. op cit, p.444.

The Ottoman Empire, imperial Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire recognised the Republic of North Africa in an act that was intended to embolden its protagonists. It had registered with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.¹⁷⁶ When the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War, on the side of Germany and Austro-Hungary, this objective had been achieved, according to Sheikh Taher al-Zawi. However, the Germans had demanded that the Republic of North Africa should call for revolution against French and Italian colonialism in the Maghreb.¹⁷⁷

The Era of Independence

The independence of Tunisia in 1956 and of Libya in 1951 ushered in a new stage in the Maghreb. A historic transition from colonialism to a post-colonial political arrangement brought about the existence of new states. I will illustrate in this section the birth of relations between Tunisia and Libya until Gaddafi's rise to power in 1969. A novel context accompanied by different norms and structures shaped the nature of Libyan-Tunisian links. Libya and Tunisia had emerged from colonial dependence to formal independence in a period of swift decolonisation across Africa and Asia. The foreign policy of both these countries was biased towards the capitalist Western bloc, namely France, the United Kingdom and the USA, during the early years of the Cold War. Libya's ability to act in regional and international affairs was limited. King Idris I, the first King of Libya, pursued a broadly conservative policy. Treaties of friendship were signed with the UK and the USA in 1953 and 1954, respectively. British and American military bases were to be established as a result. Financial and economic assistance was to be provided to the newly independent North African kingdom. An agreement with France in 1955 demarcated Libya's southern borders with Chad.¹⁷⁸

Arab relations were not developed by the new royal regime, with its shared capital cities of Benghazi and Tripoli. Isolation appeared to be the direction followed by King Idris I. While Libya had already joined the United Nations upon independence, the decision to become a member of the Arab League in 1953 occurred only after mounting public pressure. American foreign policy, based on 'Filling the Void', was followed by Libya in the Arab world. A

¹⁷⁶al-Marzoki, *Bloodshed on Borders: The 1915 Revolution*. op cit, p.46.

¹⁷⁷Taher al-Zawi, *Struggle of Heroes in Western Tripoli* (3rd edn.: London: Darfur Ltd., 1984). p.218.,

¹⁷⁸Abdul-Hafeez al-Miyar, *The Libyan Revolution and Modern Arab Movements* (2nd edn.: Cairo: Al-mathpola Publishing, 1973). p.232.

neutral position was to be taken by the royal kingdom concerning events in the region. A policy of good neighbourliness and non-interference in conflicts dominated Libya's foreign relations.¹⁷⁹

While no military agreements were signed by the new post-colonial regime, Tunisia similarly adopted a pro-Western line in its foreign policy. French cultural and political influences were immediately felt in the public affairs of the country. The Arab and Islamic identity of this Maghrebi nation appear to have been marginalised in the formulation of policies. In the transition period to independence, differences of opinion on the future direction and the foreign policy of a post-colonial Tunisia existed among members of the ruling elite who were pushing for decolonisation. Although Habib Bourguiba and his followers wanted to focus on the negotiations with the French for independence, Saleh Ben Youssef, among others, concluded that only an armed uprising could secure the end of colonial rule. For Bourguiba, continuity with the immediate past was confirmed by the fact 'that unity between Tunisia and France is unbreakable and is central for the Constitution Party'.¹⁸⁰ The opposing view adhered to the pan-Arab ideology that was being propagated by Jamal Abdul Nasser in Cairo.¹⁸¹ A future Tunisia would reflect the Arab and Islamic identity of the Tunisian people.¹⁸²

Post-colonial Tunisia turned away from its Arab neighbours in a deliberate policy promulgated by Habib Bourguiba, aiming to adopt a neutral position in the Middle East and North Africa. Bourguiba's stay in France proved to hugely influential on his thinking. The ideals of the French Republic were attractive alternatives to the Arab and Islamic identity that were current in the Arab world. A preference for a European model of the nation-state during independence ignored or replaced Tunisian cultural and political concerns.¹⁸³

The Suez Crisis, involving co-ordinated military action by France, Britain and Israel against Egypt, and witnessed a patent lack of support for the Arab nation.¹⁸⁴ The attack by France,

¹⁷⁹Hassan Solomon, *Libya in the Past and Future* (1st edn.: Tripoli: Knowledge Publishers, 1961). p.47.

¹⁸⁰ Ahmed Mansour, Interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*, 'Aljazeera News', The witness to the era, television programme, broadcast 24th March, 2002.

¹⁸¹al-Safi, *Bourguiba: A Semi Prohibited Biography*.op cit, pp,277-293. See also Abdul-Allah Tahir, *National Movement in Tunisia* (1st edn.: Sousse: House of Knowledge, 1990).

¹⁸²Mansour, Interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*'. Op cit.

¹⁸³al-Safi, *Bourguiba: A Semi Prohibited Biography*.op cit, p,277-293.

¹⁸⁴al-Safi, *Bourguiba: A Semi Prohibited Biography*.op cit, p.205.

Britain and Israel was received by Bourguiba as a victory over his rival Nasser. Relations had deteriorated between the two men due to Egypt's backing of Saleh Ben Youssef and the presence of Ahmad Ben Bella in Algeria. He was a compatriot of Nasser and an ardent Third Worldist. It was only a matter of time, thought Bourguiba, before these two leaders would lose power.¹⁸⁵

Post-colonial relations between Tunisia and Libya were influenced by the ideological and political concerns of the new regimes. There was a lack of action in the area of integration. Despite Bourguiba's declaration that the two peoples of Tunisia and Libya formed one integral nation and were part of the greater Arab Maghreb, no steps were made to develop the political implications of this sentiment.¹⁸⁶ Interestingly, Libya's treaty of friendship and co-operation with Tunisia, in 1957, was perceived by Bourguiba as a blow to Egypt's role in the Maghreb.¹⁸⁷

Additionally, the political path pursued by Bourguiba seems to have increased the tensions with neighbouring Algeria.¹⁸⁸ Libya thus perceived Tunisia to be an unreliable partner in the region. Instead, relations with Bourguiba could be more of a burden than a benefit, following the discovery of oil in Libya in the early 1960s. American and British military bases could provide the guarantee of security for the Senoussi ruling family, thereby substituting for the need for strong relations with the Arab states surrounding Libya.¹⁸⁹ Further disagreements were caused by Bourguiba's controversial plan to resolve the Palestinian issue through the acceptance of the UN resolution for partition, with the effect of recognising Israel. The Arab League had rejected this plan in 1968. Subsequently, although Bourguiba resorted to a boycott of the Arab League, reaffirmed Tunisian support for the Palestinian resistance.

Discord among the newly independent Arab states may have resulted from ideological conflicts about what policies should be adopted to resolve the problems faced by the Arab world. Pan-Arabism dominated the regional and national debates on how to organise

¹⁸⁵Ibid. p.206.

¹⁸⁶Habib Bourguiba, 'Speech by former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba ', (Sfax, Tunisia, 10th December, 1958).

¹⁸⁷Wright, John, *Libyan History Since Prehistory*, trans. Abdul-Hafeez al-Miyar and Ahmad Bazori (1st edn.: Tripoli: al-Farjani Bookstore, 2004). p.220.

¹⁸⁸Ali-Addein Hilal, *Arab Regional System: A Study of Arab Political Relations* (5th edn.: Beirut: Arab Centre for Unity Studies, 1986). p.159.

¹⁸⁹Ibid. p.46.

politically. Tunisia aimed to be the exception to the trend, pushing for political union among the Arabs. Bourguiba narrowly defined Tunisian nationalism without reference to other sources of identity, either ethnic or religious. Whereas Arab unity possessed relevance for the Mashreq, it had no place in the Maghreb. Popular sentiments in the Maghreb show a shared Arabo-Islamic identity during the 1950s. This identity provided protection from colonial attempts to divide the western region of the Arab world from its sister region in the east.¹⁹⁰ Bourguiba's policy thus appears to have ran contrary to large sections of Arab public opinion. Calls for Arab unity echoed in the Maghreb. In the Mashreq, Abdul Nasser had attracted a large following among intellectuals, students, labourers and politicians in Arab states. Support also emerged in Libya and Tunisia. King Idris's eventual ousting was carried out by junior military officers in the Libyan army, influenced by the revolutionary currents spreading in the Arab world.

Political life in colonial Tunisia had, ironically, been freer during the colonial period than under Bourguiba's reign. Certain levels of freedom in the press and civil society were permitted by the French colonial authorities. Independence saw a worsening of the censorship practised by the post-colonial regime. An attempted coup d'état against Bourguiba in 1961 provided him with the pretext to further control Tunisian political life. Independent newspapers, political freedom, the Communist Party and the activities of trade unions and professional syndicates, were subjected to severe restrictions.¹⁹¹

Bourguiba's ideological flirtations with socialism in the early 1960s saw Tunisia being governed according to an authoritarian one-party state. Tunisian public life was a direct reflection of the ideology espoused by Bourguiba, with no dissent tolerated in the media. Civil society organisations disappeared with the expansion of the state. A huge gulf had grown between the wider society, especially the intellectuals and the youth, on the one hand, and an increasingly despotic Bourguiba, on the other. Opposition to the regime had emerged and was driven by the leftist and Islamist movements among disaffected university students. Heightening tensions soon led to popular uprisings, such as the violent protests of January, 1978. Domestic instability, in the form of these protests and Bourguiba's authoritarian tendencies, caused him to establish strong political ties with the conservative Arab

¹⁹⁰Tawfiq al-Madani, *Civil Society and the State in the Arab World*. (2nd edn.: Damascus: Arab Union of Writers 1997). p.501.

¹⁹¹Andre Potar, *Bourguiba*, translation by Tunisian Distribution Company. (1st edn.: Tunis. Tunisia: Tunisian Distribution Company, 1986). p.65.

monarchies. This move can be seen to be an apparent reversal of Bourguiba's 1957 campaigns in Tunisia to abolish the monarchy.

Conclusion

Colonial rule in Tunisia and Libya appears to have deepened the pre-existing social, political and economic ties between inhabitants on both sides of the border. Anti-colonial campaigns were waged in ways which did not recognise the legitimacy of political boundaries. Informal relations driven by tribal solidarity were powerful in creating a rebellious spirit among the tribesmen of North Africa. Local fighters from Tunisia and Libya joined common causes to fight both the French and Italians. This threat to the colonial authorities led to an active policy of containment. Native resistance fighters were arrested, deported or executed. A popular Libyan sheikh, Suleiman Baroni, was deported to Tunisia, but he continued his struggle against the Italian occupation from exile.¹⁹²

In Tunisia, two main trends emerged from within the independence movement. One trend was committed to the ideals and culture of France. A Francophile group of like-minded individuals pursued a policy of negotiations with France for the peaceful exit of the colonial administration. The second trend, inspired by an Arabo-Islamic model of renewal, was more vocal about the need for an abrupt end to colonialism. Only an armed struggle could end French rule over Tunisia.¹⁹³ Independence from France would finally arrive on 20th March, 1956. The movement which secured this momentous achievement, the Neo-Constitutional Party, was divided according to ideological and other lines, on the nature of the new government. Habib Bourguiba, on becoming President, ended this controversy that emanated from this division through the adoption of a narrowly defined agenda of political conservatism. Tunisia was not to be influenced by the Arabo-Islamic dimensions of its heritage. Instead, Bourguiba's modernisation programme was largely secular in content. The state was to be the primary object of loyalty, rather than the dominant traditional ties of the family, clan or tribe. The nationalisation of Islamic endowments, which had sustained autonomous sources of income for Muslim scholars and organisations, was part of this broader strategy. Total replacement of Shari'ah courts with a secular code of law, including

¹⁹²Khilafah al-Wibi, *Stories of Struggle*. (2nd edn.: 2; Tripoli: Centre for Historical Studies on Libyan Struggle, 2007). p.110.

¹⁹³Ali Mustafa Howidi, *The Republic of Tripoli: The First Arab Republic* (2nd edn.: Tripoli, Centre for Historical Studies on Libyan Struggle, 2000). p.73.

changes in the Personal Affairs Directorate, especially in the area of women's rights, was carried out.¹⁹⁴

In Libya, a nationalist movement had also emerged. The anti-colonial struggle against the Italians managed to survive in Libya thanks to the persistence of tribal and Sufi organisations, both in the country and abroad. Negotiations, after the defeat of Italy in World War Two, led to formal independence. Mohammad al-Senoussi became King Idris I of the Kingdom of Libya on 24th December, 1951. However, independence brought a series of new factors which emphasised the importance of ideology, particularly in its pan-Arabist version, in the relations of post-colonial states. Bourguiba rejected the regional claims of Nasser and his neighbours. King Idris similarly decided to limit Libya's relations with the revolutionary regime to the east of his border. Great Britain and the USA would be more useful allies to secure his throne, rather than the passionately anti-monarchical Nasser.

¹⁹⁴al-Madani, *Civil Society and the State in the Arab World*. op cit, p.592.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRANSITIONS TO THE POST-COLONIAL NATION

Introduction

The transition from colonial rule to independence was not a simple process. Instead, the weight of the past heavily influenced the new regimes that were in charge of Libya and Tunisia. Narrowly-defined policies were adopted by Habib Bourguiba and King Idris I in the domestic and international concerns of their states. While Francophile ideals were a source of inspiration for Bourguiba, religious conservatism and a close friendship with the British defined Libya's politics. However, the ousting of Idris by Libyan army officers, while he was in Turkey seeking medical attention, was an important moment in Libyan contemporary history. An era of radical politics was initiated, reflecting the ideological battles of the Cold War. I will illustrate in this chapter the political context of Libya and Tunisia. Further, attention will be focused on three key areas of this context. The examination of domestic politics, the economies and nature of religion in the countries examined in this thesis, will help to understand their foreign policy in a broader framework. Inter-state relations between Libya and Tunisia were shaped by these areas in ways which indicate their closeness to each other.

The first area in this chapter focuses on the domestic politics of post-colonial Libya and Tunisia. A rising authoritarianism in these two nations became the main characteristic of their politics. Bourguiba had chosen the path of modernisation, strongly influenced by French culture and ideas. Alternative points of view were either ignored or eliminated. Islamists demanded that Islam should be acknowledged as a core element of Tunisia's identity. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, after ousting Bourguiba, decided to embark on a path of political pluralism and to include the Islamic Tendency Movement, which had changed its name to the Renaissance Movement 'Ennahdha Movement'. In Libya, Gaddafi implemented a socialist ideology that was inspired by the Arabism of Jamal Abdul Nasser. The end of the monarchy signalled the beginning of a revolutionary period for the country. Expansion of the state into society would leave little space for the free market or competitive politics.

The second area examines the impact of economics in Libya and Tunisia. These two economies were very different. King Idris had presided over the discovery of oil in a largely

tribal society. Plans for modernisation were formulated that were based on a free market model. However, the change in political regime introduced a radical ideology in charge of Libya. Socialist developmental plans were implemented, with more failures than successes. Tunisia's economy differed sharply from the other states in the Maghreb. The lack of natural resources was made up for by the reliance on agriculture and tourism. Ben Ali's open door policies aimed to bring foreign direct investment into the Tunisian economy.

The third area looks at Islam's influence on the politics and society of the Maghreb that can be seen in the history of the region. Religious institutions often act as social organisations at the same time. Bourguiba insisted on the separation of religion and the state. His bitter struggle with the Islamists seems to confirm this conviction. However, Ben Ali's policy towards his religious opponents, particularly the Islamic Tendency Movement, was initially that of engagement, until he adopted Bourguiba's tactics of using the security services and judiciary to control alternative religious discourses. In this chapter, the example of the Senoussiyya Brotherhood in Libya shows the interdependence of religion, society and state-building. Although Islam was employed to create a climate of religious conservatism in Libya, Gaddafi tried to transform it into a revolutionary force. The above factors will be discussed in order to shed light on how they created limitations and opportunities for Libyan-Tunisian relations. I will examine these relations in greater detail in the following chapters.

Domestic Politics

Revolution and Socialism in Libya

Widespread changes in Libya were introduced after the overthrowing of King Idris I. The 1969 revolution brought Muammar Gaddafi to power, with other officers, in the declaration of the 'Libyan Arab Republic', signalling the end of the 18 year old monarchy.¹⁹⁵ However, Gaddafi became Prime Minister in January, 1970, and implemented a radical agenda, which challenged the *status quo*. A programme of nationalisation targeted the foreign-owned oil companies that were present in Libya. The monarchy-era military bases were closed down. Arabism became the ideology of the new regime. A 'Cultural Revolution' was subsequently launched in 1973. Libya's legal system was abolished by Gaddafi in an attempt to initiate a

¹⁹⁵ The Revolution Command Council consisted of 12 military officers. These officers, led by M. Gaddafi, were involved in a coup against the King, Muhammad Idris, in September, 1969. The Council held all of the legal and executive powers in the country.

revolutionary plan to reconstruct the society of his country. Political activity was consequently restricted to the official narrative of the state. The publication of Gaddafi's *Green Book* captured his ideological beliefs and objectives about politics, economics, society and religion in Libya. In 1977, the outlining of the theory, the 'Authority of the Nation', was a major turning point for the Libyan domestic political scene. Political parties were to be banned, and this was accompanied by the clear warning that those who established these entities were traitors to their homeland. A number of party leaders, university students and activists were subsequently executed.¹⁹⁶

Two key sources of power in Libya can be mentioned to explain how Gaddafi was able to dominate its politics. The actual process of decision-making was no longer in the formal sphere. Institutions such as the legislature, judiciary and executive, were either severely weakened or emptied of any real impact on the lives of Libyans. Instead, the vast wealth from natural resources and tribal alliances maintained Gaddafi's tight and unpredictable grip on his society.¹⁹⁷ It may be suitable to examine here how the informal structure of decision-making in Libya among clans and tribes subordinated or marginalised the formal institutions of the state. However, these institutions were still needed for the purposes of legitimacy and bureaucracy. Rigid boundaries between state and society were gradually eroded in a very particular form of populism.

Similarly, Gaddafi's policies did recognise a distinction between politics and the economy. The Libyan economy also fell within the responsibility of the new regime in Tripoli. Gaddafi's ideology advocated an enlarged role for the state in the daily lives of Libyans. Socialism was adopted to be the means to redistribute wealth on a more equitable basis. Naturally, the existence of the institutions and practices of the free market were eliminated. New laws and regulations were introduced, and these aimed at recreating a new society that was free from the oppression of foreign imperialism and its domestic agents. Government-owned companies and sectors were born. Large revenues from oil and natural gas drove and sustained the new economic policies of the revolutionary regime. The ratio of Libyans to the revenue being generated from natural resources allowed Gaddafi's ideology to avoid the

¹⁹⁶ For more details, see, *The Libyan Front for National Rescue, Models of Political Life of the Libyans* (Centre for Studies & Documentation, 1994). pp.40-61.

¹⁹⁷ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1991), p. 463.

problems plaguing the redistribution of wealth in states with large populations. This economic policy was very much in force for almost 35 years.¹⁹⁸

The 'President-for-Life' and the Islamist Challenge

The regime, led by Bourguiba, in neighbouring Tunisia was similarly under the tight control of a single figure and party. Power was concentrated in the Constitutional Party, the movement which had negotiated independence from the French, with no genuine competition from other political parties. Tolerance of these parties appears to have been motivated by the need to have the facade of pluralism to grant further legitimacy to the republican regime. Democracy was seen as a challenge to the stability of the state. The prestigious status and ability of the state could only be fully realised through a strong autocratic leader who was in charge of the country.¹⁹⁹

A 'one-man state' was the primary vision of Bourguiba in a post-colonial Tunisia. However, this inevitably created a fertile situation for collision with other political actors. During the 1960s, university students had clashed with state security forces. A large gulf between Bourguiba and his political opponents was now out in the open.

Political rifts also appeared within the ruling party. It began to lose influence on the regime during the 1970s. A multi-party system was formally introduced in the early 1980s, due to political and economic pressures in Tunisia in this period. However, the move towards multi-partyism in April, 1981, failed to convince the opposition of the genuineness of political reform.²⁰⁰ Bourguiba's regime still had a tight grip on the reins in all the institutions of the state. The change to the party system was ridiculed by the opposition as a legitimacy enhancing act, solely for the benefit of Bourguiba and his decision to be 'President-for-Life' of Tunisia.

During Bourguiba's reign, public opposition took the form of protests during the 1980s. 'The Bread Uprising' in 1984 signalled a greater readiness to voice anger against the Tunisian regime's policies. Bourguiba responded to the protests by sacking his Prime Minister, Mohammad Mzali, in 1986. During the same period, the Islamic Tendency Movement, a recently formed Islamist movement, posed a forceful challenge to the stability of the

¹⁹⁸Mohammed Almaqrif, *Dialogues for Freedom*. (The Libyan Front for National Rescue, 1990). p.143.

¹⁹⁹al-Safi, 'Bourguiba: the Departure of the Last Bey '. *Beirut, al-Safir Newspaper*, 10/04/2006 , P 5.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

authoritarian regime.²⁰¹ The roots of the rivalry between Bourguiba's essentially Francophile policy and the Arabo-Islamic platform could be found in the colonial era. An unresolved ideological disagreement between Bourguiba's Neo-Constitutional Party, established in 1934, and the Constitutional Party, led by Abdul-Aziz Tha'albi, has persisted throughout the decades since independence. The Islamic Tendency Movement had organised themselves into a social force before proceeding to establish a political party. Bourguiba's reaction was to eliminate the religiously-motivated claimant to power. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was appointed in his capacity as Prime Minister to confront this threat to the power of the republican regime and to Bourguiba personally. However, the Islamists emerged as a stronger political actor, gaining more popular support from ordinary Tunisians. The arrest of Rachid al-Ghannouchi by Bourguiba in 1987 sparked clashes on the streets and university campuses of Tunisia.²⁰² Events quickly degenerated into an uncompromising political crisis, precipitating Ben Ali to take steps to remove Bourguiba from power on 7th November, 1987.²⁰³

Tunisia now had a new President with Ben Ali's succession. Leaders of the Islamist movement were freed as a political gesture of goodwill. A smooth transition to the new regime, unhindered by the problems of the previous regime, was the intended objective. Nonetheless, the demand for a less authoritarian state did not disappear. Leaders and activists from the Islamic Tendency Movement were arrested in another round of political persecution. Many also fled abroad to escape Ben Ali's society-wide crackdown on Islamists. The new regime seems not to have been a complete break from the Bourguiba era. No room was made for the peaceful transfer of political power, with Ben Ali firmly controlling the state institutions and the economy. In the former area no genuine efforts were thus made to maintain the separation of power. Media censorship continued uninterrupted. I will now examine in more detail the policies pursued by Ben Ali when he was President.

A New Leader and a New Future for Tunisia?

Initially, Ben Ali attempted to project the image of a President who was driven by a reform agenda, after decades of authoritarian rule. The Neo-Constitutional Party was reinvented

²⁰¹Ibid.

²⁰² John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 103.

²⁰³Ezzedine Shukri, 'Political Change and Crisis of the Regime in Tunisia', *International Political*. Ahram Centre for Political & Strategic Studies, issue 92 (1988). p.209.

according to democratic lines. In November, 1988, a speech by Ben Ali to party members declared,

Today, we start a new phase in the history of our party, which will qualify it to include all those groups who have real intentions to work together in accordance with the new directions. At this point, the actual dimensions of the decision of the Central Committee to change the name of our party to become “The Constitutional Democratic Assembly” appear. The Assembly will be open to all citizens who might wish to join its various structures.²⁰⁴

Apparent changes to the formal institutions of power were meant to signal a new political environment, with Ben Ali occupying the positions of President and Chairman of the ruling party. Tunisia's political order indicated continuity with the reign of Bourguiba when Ben Ali was President. Political consolidation of the new regime occurred through the involvement of opposition parties. Civil society organisations, trade unions and human rights associations had approved the National Charter of 7th November, 1988. Despite the evident participation of organised political groups in the transition process from Bourguiba to Ben Ali, no genuine democratic reforms were affected. Five consecutive electoral victories for Ben Ali in Presidential elections from 1989 until 2009, demonstrate the persistence of authoritarian practices in Tunisia. Ben Ali appears to have planned to be a 'President-for-Life' in the same manner as his predecessor.²⁰⁵

A review of the Islamic Tendency Movement, renamed later as the Renaissance Movement, in Tunisia at this stage will help to identify the variety of ideas and platforms which could have been adopted by the new Ben Ali regime in the areas of domestic and foreign policies. I will then explore the dynamics between this movement and the Tunisian state in more depth. The presence of Islamist actors, as an organised force, still presented a threat to Ben Ali's legitimacy that was similar to the situation in Bourguiba's reign.

Political pluralism was an urgent issue for Ben Ali in his new role as President. Senior officials in his government echoed the same ideas about the need to include previously excluded actors in the political life of Tunisia. Disagreements exist about the extent to which

²⁰⁴Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, 'Speech by President to the Tunisian Constitutional Party', (Tunis: November, 1988).

²⁰⁵Tawfiq al-Madani, *The Police-State in Modern Tunisia* (1st edn.: Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, 2011). pp.107-114.

this was realised. A view proposed on the motives and results of the seeming political reforms points to its employment as a tool of propaganda, used to gain legitimacy for a new regime.²⁰⁶ A diversity of political parties, espousing different ideological and political platforms, can be identified during Ben Ali's reign with some disappearing from Tunisia's political map after 2011.²⁰⁷ From 1956 until 2011, the Democratic Constitutional Assembly Party presided over a *de facto* one-party state. Abdul-Aziz Tha'albi was a founder of the organisation, originally known as the Free Constitutional Party, dedicated to the cause of ending colonial rule in Tunisia. In 1934, Habib Bourguiba changed its name to the Neo-Constitutional Party.²⁰⁸ Another alteration to the identity of the party occurred when Ben Ali, after 1987, replaced 'New' with 'Democratic', in line with the high expectations of the time. Construction of a democratic civil society, based on respect for human rights and law, was the declared objective.

The reinvention of the Islamist movement also took place, as it began to participate in what seemed to be a freer political climate in Tunisia. It was originally founded as the 'Islamic Group' in the 1960s.²⁰⁹ An Arabo-Islamic cultural identity is the primary focus of the loyalty and inspiration behind the Renaissance Movement. On 6th June, 1981, the group adopted the name 'Islamic Tendency Movement' to assert an ideological alternative to Bourguiba's Francophile policies after his thirty-five years in power. A process of ideological evolution characterises the beliefs of the leadership and its members. Democracy, human rights, justice and freedom are major principles that have shaped the ideology of the Renaissance Movement in a context that was dominated by the authoritarianism displayed by both Bourguiba and Ben Ali.

Rivalry between the Islamic Tendency Movement and the Ben Ali Regime

Bourguiba's approach to the challenge posed by the Islamists was more or less motivated by the need to contain them, using the coercive and judicial arms of the state. Mass arrests and court cases took place that were aimed at finishing off the Islamic Tendency Movement once

²⁰⁶al-Azher Buowani, *Political Systems and the Tunisian Regime* (1st edn.: University of Tunis Press, 2002). p.219.

²⁰⁷Ibid.

²⁰⁸al-Safi, 'Bourguiba the Departure of the Last Bey'. op cit, p6.

²⁰⁹The Renaissance Movement, <www.ennahdha.tn>, accessed 10/05 2013.

and for all with Bourguiba determined to apply the death sentence on Ghannouchi.²¹⁰ However, the ousting of Bourguiba led to the release of the majority of the Islamist leaders jailed in this period. The Islamic Tendency Movement was encouraged to participate in an apparent political liberalisation of Tunisia. It signed Ben Ali's sponsored National Charter in 1988, expressing the desire to take part in Tunisian politics on a democratic and multi-party basis. In 1989, the Islamist group had become the Renaissance Movement, in another move where it sought to integrate itself into the new political situation. In the same year, Ben Ali won the Presidential elections with a majority.²¹¹

The appeal of Islamist ideas had spread among workers and students during the late 1970s and 1980s. Official recognition of political party status was repeatedly rejected by the political authorities. Instead, the Islamist group resorted to contesting parliamentary elections through independent electoral lists.²¹² Although formal political institutions had managed to successfully exclude the Renaissance Movement, the worsening living conditions in Tunisia pushed many to support it. Islam, if properly interpreted and implemented, could provide the solutions needed for the political, economic and social problems that the country was facing. The Renaissance Movement soon grew to be the second largest political actor after Ben Ali's ruling party.

The increasing prominence of the newly renamed Islamist group also raised concerns in Ben Ali's regime, which had intended to accommodate and defuse potential threats to its legitimacy. To begin with, Ben Ali had adopted a tone of conciliation with the various political actors in Tunisia, including the Islamists. His invitation to join the political process was perhaps underpinned by the need to first secure stability. The consolidation of power and the task of rebuilding the country seem to have been priorities. Another explanation behind Ben Ali's initial tolerance of the opposition, particularly the Islamist groups in the country, was the inheritance of a heavy burden from the Bourguiba's reign. Reluctance to become involved in divisive political contests which might lead to chaos, could have motivated the attempt at political pluralism. The objective of easing political tensions was to be implemented through new reforms of the formal structures of politics.

²¹⁰ Michael J. Willis, *Politics and Power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from Independence to the Arab Spring* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012), 166.

²¹¹ Shazli al-Klibi, *7th November: The Quiet Uprising* (Tunis: Abdul-Kareem Abdul-Allah Publishing House, 1993), p.55.

²¹² Ibid. p.58.

Positive messages about the imminent democratic changes to the Tunisian political system were sent by the Ben Ali regime and acknowledged by the opposition movements. Reforms in the areas of human rights, and the registration of three new political parties, the Progressive Socialist Party, the Unionist Democratic Party and the Social Liberal Party, secured an expanding base of legitimacy for Ben Ali's early years in office. However, these steps failed to include one of the leading actors in Tunisia, after early constructive engagement, in the form of the Renaissance Movement. No such recognition of its political party status would be awarded to the Islamist group. Two different ideologies had put Ben Ali and the Islamists on opposite sides in a similar way to that in which they had generated conflicts between Bourguiba and his religiously-inspired opponents. Increasing support in Tunisian society was also a cause for concern. These factors were behind the anxiety displayed by the regime, and they would lead to a clash with the Renaissance Movement.²¹³ A full reversal by Ben Ali from the path of political liberalisation would end with the ban and the arrest of many members of the Islamist organisation. The political pluralism of the early Ben Ali years was replaced by increasing authoritarianism by a regime focused on managing dissent through elections or force. Opposition political parties, in this context, remained weak. Parliamentary elections indicate the continued dominance of one-party rule, with 34 of 182 seats in the 1999 elections going to other parties.²¹⁴

A constitutional reform in 2002, making way for Ben Ali's re-election as President two years later, appeared to draw wide social support. Ben Ali's changes to the political system consisted of the creation of a new parliamentary body, called the 'Board of Advisors'. Electoral participation was intended to realise, according to the official narrative, the desires and political rights of citizens.²¹⁵ Voter turnout was high, and a large number backed the plan for political reform.²¹⁶ Nonetheless, the cosmetic changes to the constitution did not alter the actual exercise of power in the hands of Ben Ali's regime. Instead, they simply reinforced the authoritarian nature of this regime with an appearance of democratic legitimacy.

²¹³Mohammad Salah, *Islam in Tunisia After the 7th November* (1st edn.: Tunis: Tunisian Company for Arts, 1993). p.198 p.124.

²¹⁴*Ibid*, p.198.

²¹⁵Faysal al-Hazmi, *Maintaining the Achievements of Tunisia on the 54th Anniversary of Independence*, www.almethaq.net/upload/File/tunis66.doc, (accessed 17th October, 2013) .

²¹⁶Salah, *Islam in Tunisia after the 7th November*. op cit, p .11.

Economic Factors

The economies of the Maghreb are diverse and vary from country to country. State policies shaped the import-export capacities, industrial and other economic sectors of its countries in a changing world. During the Cold War, socialist systems were locked in a clash with the agenda of the free market. Post-colonial states, such as Libya and Tunisia, did experiment with socialism, and this was accompanied by varying levels of success. The economic structures of these states enabled them to negotiate in investments, trade and the financial markets.²¹⁷

Oil and Development in Gaddafi's Libya

Discovery of crude oil in Libya during the 1950s was a major milestone in the economic and political development of the country. By the early 1960s, the first exports of oil began. A previously weak and decentralised economy was transformed and it became one of the rich states in the Maghreb. At that time, the total Libyan population did not exceed one and a half million.²¹⁸ King Idris's government formulated ambitious plans for development. The private sector was encouraged to participate in developing the Libyan economy, which witnessed the growth of private and public companies in various economic sectors.

The coup of 1969, carried out by military officers, carried a strong message of being opposed to the *status quo* under the Senoussi monarchy. Development was to be achieved according to a different political model that influenced the socialist policies of Libya's neighbours and other Third World countries. A long term plan was articulated in light of these new changes. The regime was to initially realise a three year development plan, 1973-1975, followed by a five year plan, 1976-1980, to end in a five year plan, 1981-1986, in order to achieve the goal of development.²¹⁹

However, the grand plans for the development of Libya did not lead to the intended results. The following are a few of the areas which not materialise: a suitable infrastructure for

²¹⁷ Fadel Zaki, *Foreign Policy and Its Dimensions in International Politics* (5th edn.: Baghdad Shafiq Press, 1996). p.179.

²¹⁸ al-Mukhtar Kerfaa, *The Labour Movement in Libya 1943-1969* (Tripoli: The Libyan Jihad Centre for Historical Studies, 2000). p.177.

²¹⁹ These plans were put in place by the Libyan regime to develop the socio-economic structure of the country. Yet, these plans were designed and achieved by the centralised direction of the government. The plans were put in place in accordance with Law No. 8 of the Constitutional Charter that was produced after the 1969 coup. For more details, see Libyan Government, 'Plans of Economic Change ', in The General People's Committee (ed.), (Tripoli: 1981-1985).

modern economic activities; national programmes for light manufacturers and strategic industries, such as the oil industry; the generation of other sources of national income; and the promotion of self-sufficiency projects. As a result, Libya became largely dependent on importing goods and services from abroad, with oil forming about 95% of Libya's national income.²²⁰ The failure of Gaddafi's socialist plan of development was attributed to the lack of expertise and knowledge underpinning these programmes. Agricultural projects for development did not succeed, due to the lack of suitable and informed reviews on the level of water resources needed for their implementation. Consequently, a large depletion of groundwater in the areas that were subject to these experiments led to their desertification.²²¹

The ideology of the Libyan state was the principal factor driving the development projects and their subsequent failures, as mentioned above. A centralised public sector, controlled by an authoritarian state, was present in all sectors of the economy. The nationalisation of private foreign companies and financial institutions was the first stage in Gaddafi's plan for making Libya a shining model of development in the Arab world and among post-colonial nations. Certain goods and services were delivered by new public sector organisations. The private sector was one of the first victims of a development plan based on the nationalisation of the economy.

In the late 1970s, Libya underwent another round of political and economic changes according to a new ideological agenda that was formulated by Gaddafi. The nature of the state was radically transformed under the banner of the 'People's Authority'. The seemingly democratic premise was that the “Libyan people are the source of political power in the country”. In the wake of these changes, the regime also altered the formal name of the country, from the Libyan Arab Republic, to the Libyan Arab People’s Socialist Jamahiriya.²²² A regime-imposed vision of the ideal society, combining socialism and Arabism, dominated Libya. The 'Third Global Theory' was proposed as the only viable alternative to the political

²²⁰International Monetary Foud, 'Final Report on Libya', Middle East and Central Asia Department (ed).Official Report . (2013).

²²¹Muhammad al-sinni, ‘The Reasons behind the Failure of Development Plans in Libya’, MA Dissertation (Academy of Graduate Studies, Tripoli, 2004) p.67

²²² The name of Libya as a “State” appeared after independence on 24th September, 1951, under the name of the “United Libyan Kingdom.” After the 1969 revolution, the Gaddafi regime changed the name so that it became the “Libyan Arab Republic”. In the period 1977-1986, the name was again changed to become the “Libyan Arab People’s Socialist Jamahiriya”. Not only this, but also the regime changed the name of the country once more, after the US-Attacks on Libya in April, 1986. The new name was the “Great Libyan Arab People’s Socialist Jamahiriya.”

and economic systems of Western capitalism and Soviet communism. Gaddafi's Green Book contained various policies and ideas, allocating shares in the ownership of companies and factories to their workers and employees. Phrases such as "Partners not Workers" demonstrate the seemingly egalitarian nature of the vision, especially on workers' rights, which were expressed by Gaddafi in his book.²²³

Rules were outlined in this ideology that sought to create a worker-based ownership of organisations. Additional rules restricted the role of the private sector in the Libyan economy. Gaddafi was motivated by a desire to redistribute the large revenues of wealth entering Libya from its natural resources. Modernisation was to be achieved according to a particular model of development that was inspired by his economic theory. The following are a few key themes in this theory: fulfilment of the basic needs of society stood at the heart of all economic activities, thereby excluding the profit-led logic of the private sector; freedom from foreign influence or control in the domestic affairs of Libya; a system of sharing the ownership of the means of production was to replace the previous unjust system of wages; a reorganisation of the legal rights of ownership, complemented by new regulations, in order to guarantee fair living conditions for all members of society.²²⁴

I think Gaddafi's revolutionary policies were mainly aimed at the restriction of private companies. A free market economy would be an obstacle to the implementation of his vision of changing Libyan society. All economic and industrial sectors were to be owned by either the state or the people. Further, I think that Gaddafi's strict control of private capital was motivated by ideological and political objectives. The extreme inequalities of wealth that are created by capitalism were to be avoided. Additionally, the continued existence of private capital under the conditions of economic freedom, would lead to political freedom in Libya, which posed a threat to the tight grip of the Gaddafi regime over Libyan society. In the preceding analysis, I have tried to show the dependence of Gaddafi's economic theory on a centralised system that was driven by the public sector. Redistribution of wealth and the restriction of private ownership were supplemented by the need to avoid market-based fluctuations in the prices of goods and services.

²²³Lillian Craig Harris, *Libya: Qadhafi's Revolution and the Modern State* (Westview Press: Boulder, 1986). pp.75-77.

²²⁴Farahat Sharnana, *The Need for a New People's Socialist System* (1st edn.: Tripoli: House for Media and Publication, 1992). pp.73-87.

These views changed after 1977, to take the form of policies and laws which governed the Libyan economy for more than thirty years. Libya had achieved, according to Yuonis Ahmad, a certain degree of self-sufficiency, particularly in the production of foodstuffs, during the 1980s. These policies expanded the basis of the national industries. He goes on to argue that human development was achieved in the areas of the production skills of workers and in living conditions.²²⁵ However, the reality on the ground was quite the opposite. Economic conditions, in fact, deteriorated, and total production in the economy, including the nationalised factories, declined. Inconsistent implementation of the development plans envisioned by the Gaddafi regime seems to be the source of the failures mentioned. From the early 1990s, the private sector was admitted into the mainstream Libyan economy.

Another explanation for such a deliberate policy reversal can be located in the changes in international affairs. The balance of power between the USA and the USSR which dominated the period of the Cold War, came to a sudden end with the collapse of the latter. Socialist models were regarded as an unwanted legacy of the past. However, I think the change in the Libyan regime's policies was pushed forward by two factors. The first factor lies in the removal of the private sector in the plan for economic development, which had led to a decline in the Libyan economy. New rules from the revolutionary regime sought to curb private investment during the 1970s and 1980s. Government-supported popular committees singled out private firms and prosecuted their owners under the socialist laws in force. The second factor revolves around the inexperienced and weak public sector, which was overburdened by Gaddafi's ambitious ideological goals for economic development. Failure was thus the result of this policy. Administrative and financial corruption had increased throughout the state at levels that were unprecedented prior to 1977. A fall in the quality of the provisions for health and education plagued public services. Broader economic sectors, such as industry and agriculture, failed to generate national income.²²⁶ Oil remained Libya's main source of wealth.

Libya's economic resources were used to maintain its regional policy. Companies jointly run by Libya and states in its immediate region had official backing to compete with foreign

²²⁵Yunis Ahmad, *The Main Features of the Economies of Arab Countries* (2nd edn.: Beirut: The Renaissance Publishing House, 1989). p.69.

²²⁶Mohammad al-Amin, *Effects of Regional and Global Changes on Future of Arab Maghreb Integration*. (1st edition. Benghazi, Libya: National Books House, 1998) p136.

corporations. Intensive investments in Tunisia that were due to inter-state agreements demonstrated Gaddafi's desire for integration with his neighbours through his economic power. The Tunisian economy saw an inflow of Libyan investments, facilitated by private and public firms.

Tunisia's Export Economy and Europe

Tunisia's economy differs markedly from the economies of its neighbours in the Maghreb. It is a developing country with no oil or natural gas reserves. Agriculture and tourism provide the Tunisian economy with sources of national income. While Europe is the country's main export market for agricultural products, the tourism sector generates about \$2 billion annually. Further, this sector is the second largest sector, in terms of employment, in the country, after agricultural activities.²²⁷

The small size of the economy was not an obstacle to the development of Tunisia's human resources. A reasonably adequate infrastructure exists in the provision of health, education and other sectors. Schooling is similar to the French model, as a result of Bourguiba's Francophile policy and at the expense of an Arabo-Islamic traditional or conservative tendency. Tunisian economic development achievements are thus substantial if compared to the achievements of some oil-rich countries.²²⁸

During Ben Ali's reign, an open door policy, in accordance with the International Monetary Fund, was implemented. Encouragement of the private and public sectors was an important part of the process of economic development. Foreign direct investment appeared to be a priority for the Tunisian government, in order to stimulate growth. Lax tax regulations were introduced to attract national and foreign investors. Tunisia's relative political stability in a region that was characterised by insecurity, such as the civil war in Algeria and the pariah status of Libya, made it an appealing prospect for investors. Further, this aspect of the country was conducive to growth in the tourism sector.²²⁹ Economic agreements with Europe, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Egypt were signed. Libyan-Tunisian relations were preceded by a political move to resolve a longstanding border dispute, beginning in the Bourguiba era,

²²⁷Ahmed Ellithy, *Tunisian Economy and Prospects for the Future* (1st edn.: Tunis / Tunisia South Publishing House, 2012). p.128.

²²⁸Shazli al-Klibi, *7th November: The Quiet Uprising* (Tunis: Abdul-Kareem Abdul-Allah Publishing House, 1993). op cit p.55.

²²⁹Ibid. p.58.

seeking to establish the foundations for inter-state dialogue. Libya's response also contributed to a thawing of relations. Libya invited Tunisia into its exploitation of the Bourj Oil Field. This field was later called the 7th November Field in commemoration of a visit that M. Gaddafi made to Tunisia in 1988.²³⁰

Islam and Society in the Maghreb

The role of religion in the Maghreb is tied to the thousand year old presence of Islam in the region. Social institutions were influenced by religious scholars and movements. Further, political authorities needed to be seen to possess legitimacy gained from religious texts or interpretations. Pre-colonial North Africa witnessed successive dynasties that were based, more or less, on Islamic norms and ideals. The 10th century Fatimid Caliphate, originally from Tunisia, drew its inspiration from the seventh Shi'ite imam. Religion, politics and society were closely intertwined. Ottoman sovereignty over Tunisia and Libya did not change the relationship between religion and society. Islam continued to be the primary identity of the state. The rulers and their subjects were connected by the bond of Islamic rituals and norms. During the colonial occupation of the Maghreb, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, radical changes to this relationship were underway. There was an attempt to weaken the legitimacy of Islam among the Muslim subjects of the Maghreb.

The Sahara Desert in North Africa was home to the Senoussi Revivalist Movement, with origins in the western region of the Arabian Peninsula. A simple message of a return to Islamic sources without obstruction from centuries of traditional scholarship had attracted the tribesmen of the Libyan interior. Further, the Sufism offered by the religious leaders of the Senoussiyya satisfied both the spiritual and social needs of the tribes. Lodges were established for communal living, which provided a social backbone to the movement, and later the Senoussi state.²³¹ For many Libyans, especially tribesmen, Islam was synonymous with Sufism. Libya's first post-colonial head of state was a grandson of the founder of the Senoussi Movement. The revivalist trend thus provided the building blocks for the construction of the state under a monarchy.

²³⁰Ibid. P 79.

²³¹ Ishak M. Husaini, "Islamic Culture in Arab and African Countries," in Kenneth W. Morgan, *Islam - The Straight Path: Islam interpreted by Muslims* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993), p. 244.

French colonialism was not tolerant of religion, and sought to restrict its scope. The French notion of 'laïcité' appears to have influenced colonial policy. Similarly, the post-colonial elite, led by Bourguiba in Tunisia, wanted to divorce religion from politics. Islam was to be restricted to the private sphere. Inevitably, opposition to this ideological position appeared among certain segments of Tunisian society. The Islamic Group, later the Islamic Tendency Movement and, finally, the Renaissance Movement, advocated a project of Islamic revivalism in the 1970s. However, Bourguiba was determined to keep religion out of politics. Persecution of the Islamic Tendency Movement finally brought about a confrontation with Ghannouchi and his fellow Islamist members.

While Bourguiba did co-operate with Saudi Arabia to establish the Organisation of Islamic Countries, it was not to be a supra-national institution fostering any form of pan-Islamism.²³² Instead, a safe distance from Arab and Muslim states was kept. Transnational ideologies were distrusted. Gaddafi's Arabism was thus perceived to be a direct threat to Tunisia's national sovereignty and stability, on the one hand, and to Bourguiba's personal authority, on the other. For Gaddafi, the power of Islam was to be employed for the defence of the oppressed. Its message, once reinterpreted, could offer an alternative to the conservatism of Arab regimes.

A Francophile agenda adapted to Tunisia seems to have shaped its relationship with Islam in domestic, regional and international politics. Religion was acknowledged in Tunisia after Bourguiba was overthrown by Ben Ali and Tunisia was under the control of the new regime. Tunisian foreign policy started to cite the factors of Islam and Arabism in the regional context of the Arab world. These two cultural strands of Tunisian identity would now be cornerstones of the country's interstate relations. However, Bourguiba's aggressive engagement with Islamists would return under Ben Ali, with no religious discourses being permitted except those that were sanctioned by the state.

²³² Shireen Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998), p. 157.

Conclusion

The post-colonial contexts of Tunisia and Libya point to a complex set of factors interacting with each other to produce stability or instability, and successes or failures in policies. I examine three key areas of concern in this chapter. Domestic politics in Tunisia and Libya were soon transformed into authoritarian systems which did not tolerate differences of opinion after independence. Early hopes for greater freedom did not materialise. Modernisation and development pushed a heavy burden on the countries of the Maghreb. Pluralism was not a priority for the regimes that were in charge in Libya and Tunisia. Political parties found themselves either banned or severely weakened. The Islamic Tendency Movement fell foul of both Bourguiba and Ben Ali, and after initially supporting his transitional efforts at pluralism, the members of the Movement were forced into prison or out of the country.

In Gaddafi's case, the use of Libya's vast wealth, generated from oil and natural gas, drove his radical policies. Socialism and Arabism were brought together, similarly to Nasser's Egypt, in a society still dominated by tribes and clans. These tribes and clans were part of a web of power relations which allowed Gaddafi to avoid the formal structures of politics in order to govern. Nonetheless, the apparent failure of Gaddafi's ambitious plans for the development of Libya squandered its wealth. Tunisia's dependence on agriculture and tourism encouraged it to reach out to Europe for export markets and visitors. The open door policies implemented by Ben Ali, after the Bourguiba regime was no longer in power, had brought greater foreign direct investment. Further, Tunisia's relationship with Europe was crucial for economic development.

The role of religion in Tunisia and Libya reflects the particular history of each colony under the French and Italians, respectively. Laïcité was a key conviction for Bourguiba, and for other Francophile leaders. Islam was to be excluded from politics in every way possible. In society, the presence of religion should be marginalised. Resistance to this policy was manifested in the formation of the Islamic Group. This movement struggled first with Bourguiba, culminating with the threat of a death sentence hanging over Ghannouchi in Court. Ben Ali soon freed opposition groups. Islamists also found a freer climate that allowed them to participate in the transitional process, with the new President's guarantees of political pluralism. Islam and Arab identity were finally accepted into the official narrative of the

Tunisian state. The expectations for pluralism were ended when Ben Ali restricted the activities of his opponents and banned the Renaissance Movement, after it had changed its name from the Islamic Tendency Movement.

The Libyan case presents an interesting example where Islam, society and state-building were brought together in the post-colonial period. Libya's first head of state, King Idris I, was the leader of the Senoussiyya Brotherhood. This revivalist movement was founded in the 19th century, motivated by the desire to return to the simple and pristine faith of the early Muslims. Although this radical theological call grew fainter over time, the Senoussiyya opposed Italian colonialism and were able to start a process of state-building in Libya where none had existed. King Idris's ousting was followed by renewed attention to Islam by the new regime. However, the impact of religion would not be restricted to the immediate environment of Libya. Instead, the Islamic faith would be reinterpreted with a grander objective. A revolutionary ideology in foreign policy that was linked to socialism and Arabism, both in the Arab world and outside its boundaries.

CHAPTER FIVE: IDEOLOGY: BETWEEN CONSERVATISM AND ARABISM IN LIBYAN-TUNISIAN RELATIONS

Introduction

The regimes leading Tunisia and Libya after independence had inherited the colonial borders imposed on North Africa. Various treaties between colonial powers, such as the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 and the Bannerman Conference of 1907, formed the foundation of the nation-state system. Political change had created an opportunity to consolidate emerging nation-states. Local elites agreed and disagreed about how to organise their states. Domestic affairs influenced the foreign policy pursued by postcolonial states. Libya and Tunisia began their existence as formal nation-states in a region still experiencing the last vestiges of colonialism. The Algerian War of Independence against the French was being waged between 1954 and 1962. Major challenges stood before Libya and Tunisia. In this chapter, I will analyse the primary sources in order to establish the extent to which ideology dominated Libyan-Tunisian relations in the period from 1969 until 1987. The decline of ideology after 1987, following Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's ousting of Habib Bourguiba, will also be examined in the discussion below.

A number of factors play an important role in shaping the foreign policy of states. Decision-makers take into account economic factors, in order to identify the scope of foreign policy.²³³ Similarly, political ideology helps to direct the orientation of foreign policy-makers helping to shed light on and interact in their context.²³⁴ For some, ideology retains its importance at different levels of politics.²³⁵ Geography is also a key factor for a state, and it can enable it to achieve a certain policy.²³⁶ States like Egypt, Oman and those in the Gulf, are thus able to play vital roles in global trade due to their locations.²³⁷ The impact of political elites on foreign policy is also worth mentioning, because of their ability to formulate strategies in this

²³³Ibrahim Basyoni, *Role of Contacts in Decision-Making in the Arab World* (1st edn.: Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1993). p.103.

²³⁴M al-Hazaymeh, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of Some Arab Countries*, Ph.D. Thesis. (University of Tunis, 1994). p.499.

²³⁵Malik Shahyoun, *Ideology and Politics*. op cit, p.13.

²³⁶Ismael Sabri, *The International Political Relations* (2nd edn.: Kuwait: As-salasil House, 1987). p.314.

²³⁷Fathi Muhammad, *Economic Geography*. (1st edn.: Beirut: the Renaissance Publishing House, 1984). p.48.

area.²³⁸ However, challenges to this ability can be seen in the Arab world. Former colonial states continue to try to influence Arab countries through economic aid programmes.²³⁹ Some Arab statesmen had thus adopted particular ideologies to maintain the sovereignty of their countries in a context characterised by unfavourable global conditions.²⁴⁰

The Early Political Context of Libyan-Tunisian Relations

In the first years of independence, political relations between Libya and Tunisia were relatively smooth. Libya, under a monarchy, allied itself to the camp of the capitalist West, against the socialist camp and Republican Tunisia, and it also ignored the call for revolution that was voiced by its neighbours. Bilateral relations between these two countries remained stable. Nasserism's spread throughout the Arab world, sometimes to the disdain of regimes, was creating a new atmosphere in the region. Arab unity was becoming an appealing ideology for the masses and for the aspiring political elites. Nonetheless, Tunisia and Libya were pursuing a conservative policy of consolidating and maintaining the rule of regimes whose legitimacy was partly based on the belief that they were the most appropriate actors to occupy their position. King Idris I of Libya was the head of a regional Sufi brotherhood, which had stood its ground against the Italian occupation of his country for three decades. The Senoussiyya had taken part in the resistance campaigns of the Arab tribesmen from the desert, providing the much needed organisational framework to survive. However, the traditional understanding of Islam that was adopted by the Senoussiyya was reformist in nature, and it presented no serious diversion from the emerging and narrowly defined Libyan nation-state. The formal structures of the modern state were more or less secondary to the informal nature of the rule of Idris I.²⁴¹ He was presented as a figure of unity rather than of division, in a country with a wide network of informal relations among different tribes and clans.

Subsequently, the ideology of the state was not a source of controversy with neighbouring Tunisia, which was busy implementing Habib Bourguiba's vision of the state. The 'Tunisian

²³⁸ Zayed Mesbah, 'Effects of the Leadership Factor on Foreign Policy'. MA Dissertation, (University of Benghazi, 1992). p.111.

²³⁹ al-Hazaymeh, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of Some Arab Countries*. op cit, p.499.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. p.499.

²⁴¹ Bernard Reich (ed.), *Political Leaders of the Contemporary Middle East and North Africa: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc, 1990), p. 257.

Nation' was the primary focus of this vision.²⁴² The amicable relations between Tunisia and Libya, according to Nour -Eddin al-Alawi, were based on reciprocal visits and commercial transactions. These relations failed to have any long-lasting impact due to the limited economic capabilities of both countries.²⁴³ Returning Libyan families from Tunisia was perhaps one of the few areas of co-operation. So-called 'returnees'²⁴⁴ played an important role in King Idris I's capitalist-driven development process, providing numerous individuals with expertise and knowledge, who then headed organisations.²⁴⁵ Further, the discovery of oil in Libya resulted in a general improvement in the living standards of Libyans.²⁴⁶ The first two decades of Libyan-Tunisian relations were thus characterised by a period of concentration on domestic affairs. Nation-building within the former colonial boundaries was the priority. Tunisian foreign policy reflected Bourguiba's satisfaction with the notions of an open neighbourhood, cordial relations and non-interference.²⁴⁷ However, political groups, especially the Youssefi faction in the political elite, were dissatisfied with this foreign policy.²⁴⁸

Bourguiba the Francophile

Differences in the ideology adopted by leaders or regimes may have an impact on inter-state relations. Authoritarian states tend to concentrate power in the hands of the few. Families, clans, tribes or political parties enjoy the prestigious status of government positions, or they benefit directly from the wealth generated from nationalised resources or companies. However, ideology in the Maghreb has had a strong influence on the bilateral relations of the region's states. The Francophile Bourguiba, a graduate in French Law, was part of a recent

²⁴² Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*, (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁴³ Author's interview with Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *the Tunisian Thinker and University Professor of Sociology*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2012).

²⁴⁴ This refers to the return of thousands of Libyans to their homeland after Libya's independence in 1951, and the consequent improvement in people's living standards following the discovery of oil. These returnees had had to leave Libya seeking chances of work and a better life. Their Exodus had been forced by deteriorating economic conditions, which had resulted in hunger and the absence of security under the Italian occupation after 1911.

²⁴⁵ Author's interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the Former Tunisian Commercial Attaché. He also worked as a representative of the Export Promotion Department at the Tunisian Embassy in Libya 1998—2010, and was in charge of the Free Trade Zone, beside a Libyan counterpart*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁴⁶ Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the Former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2011).

²⁴⁷ Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Treaty of Good Neighbourship between the Kingdom of Libya and Kingdom of Tunisia', (Tunis / Tunisia 1957). At that time, Bourguiba was the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, meanwhile, Mustafa bin Halim was the Libyan Prime Minister.

²⁴⁸ The Yusufi Party was established by Saleh Ben Youssef, the Secretary General of the Free Constitutional Party, in the early 1950s. The party believes in Arab nationalism, which Jamal Abdul-Nasser was advocating. The Yusufi Party formed a strong opponent to Bourguiba in the early years of independence. For more details, see Howidi, *The Republic of Tripoli: The First Arab Republic*. op cit.

tradition of liberal intellectuals and activists who looked across the Mediterranean for inspiration, rather than local forms of traditional or reformist Islam. Close links between the West and Tunisia can be explained with reference to Bourguiba's political background and education.²⁴⁹ He had acquired his experience of politics from the anti-colonial struggle in French Tunisia. Subsequently, Bourguiba succeeded to the Tunisian presidency. Tunisia's politics reflected his controversial personality.²⁵⁰ Interestingly, Bourguiba's ideological beliefs appear to have been inconsistent. Liberalism was replaced by socialism in an era of populism. Third World politics was caught in the middle of the Cold War. Despite Bourguiba's authoritarian character, Tunisia was receptive to the wider ideological moods of the Arab world. The failure of socialism in the area of domestic policy in the late 1960s, soon led to the restoration of liberalism, in the early 1970s. The apparent lack of coherence in government policy may be attributed to a lack of coherence in Bourguiba's political and economic ideology.²⁵¹

A close relationship existed between the domestic sphere and the regional policy of Tunisia. Government policy was mainly defined by Bourguiba in a personal show of power. An ongoing struggle was taking place between Bourguiba's supporters and the Youssefists within the ruling party. This was a clear threat to Bourguiba's dominant position in the state. An attempted coup d'état, led by al-Azhar al-Sharaiti and al-Sasi al-Aswed, took place in September, 1962. Force was used to try to change the direction of Tunisia under policies that were personally directed by Bourguiba, and the high levels of discontent they generated from actions such as the closing down of the well-respected Zaytuna Madrasah. Ali Mahjoubi notes that the failed coup caused Bourguiba to tighten his grip further on the country's politics by banning political parties.²⁵² Single-party rule became a dominant feature of life in Tunisia. The coup against Bourguiba made him have a deep contempt for the role of the military in politics, which I will explore later in this chapter concerning his relations with Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and Jamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt. The coup, according to Ahmed Bannour, a former Director of Tunisian Intelligence, was largely received as being only the beginning

²⁴⁹ al-Safi, *Bourguiba: Semi-Prohibited Biography* (2nd edn.: Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 2000a).op cit, p. 205.

²⁵⁰ Ahmad Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister'*, Aljazeera News, 'The witness to the era', television programme, 2000. Episode 3.

²⁵¹ Author's interview with Shadli Iyyari, *the Former Minister of the Economy during the era of President Habib Bourguiba and a Former Governor of the Central Bank of Tunisia*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁵² Author's interview with Ali Mahjoubi, *the Historian and Researcher*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

of future uprisings against Bourguiba's rule, if radical reforms did not occur. Although some of these reforms went against his convictions, they were implemented.²⁵³

In 1963, during Bourguiba's socialist period, a new economic phase was initiated. Ahmed Ben Saleh²⁵⁴ was the Prime Minister in charge of this phase. "The ten-year perspective plan" was announced, which was also popularly known as the 'co-operatives'.²⁵⁵ Socialism was adopted in post-colonial Tunisia, largely due to the influence of Ben Saleh, a trade unionist, on Bourguiba in the Neo-Constitutional Party. A former Tunisian Prime Minister, Mohamed Mzali, observes that:

The main factor that led to Tunisia's adoption of Socialism was the great influence of Ahmed Ben Saleh. The latter convinced Bourguiba about that system, as being the easiest and shortest way to reach social justice and equity with regard to the distribution of the country's wealth. He also argued that the promotion of the working-class and the elimination of poverty would be achieved through the nationalisation of land and the establishment of socialist associations, mutual funds or cooperatives.²⁵⁶

For Ben Saleh, who was a senior member of the ruling party, the redistribution of wealth through nationalisation was urgent. Development could not wait for a free market model to stimulate economic growth for the benefit of the majority of society in a gradual process. Instead, a top-down re-organisation of the economy was needed. Indeed, Mostafa al-Zaghnouni, Minister of Planning during the rule of Bourguiba, confirmed that Ben Saleh was behind the implementation of socialist policies in Tunisia. These policies were thus put into practice, perhaps against Bourguiba's Francophile and liberal convictions. Tunisia's weak economic condition compelled a change towards the redistribution of national wealth, led by

²⁵³ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*, (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁵⁴ Ahmed Ben Saleh was the Tunisian Prime Minister during the 1960s. He was also a minister in five others Ministries: Planning, Finance, Communication, Education and Agriculture. Many of those interviewed blame him for convincing Bourguiba to engage in the socialist experience and to adopt the ten-year plan, whereby he promised to take Tunisia from underdevelopment and poverty to progress and prosperity.

²⁵⁵ The collaboration experience is based on the principle of cancelling the ownership of individual property and exploiting the fertile agricultural land, then replacing them with collective farms. It was supported by the state with modern machinery or cooperatives, sometime referred to as associations or social organisms, which nationalised agricultural land belonging to French owners.

²⁵⁶ Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the former Tunisian Prime Minister*. Episode 3. Op cit

the state.²⁵⁷

Pragmatic concerns, rather than ideological considerations, may have influenced Bourguiba to listen to his left-wing colleague in the Neo-Constitutional Party. According to al-Zaghouni,

In 1963, Tunisia's economic indicators were bad, so Ahmed Ben Saleh, who was in charge of the Unions, informed Bourguiba that the only way to promote the Tunisian economy was the adoption of Socialism. Hence, Bourguiba accepted that system as a realistic person; despite of this move was out of Bourguiba's personal conviction or admiration for Socialism, but rather it was derived from the fact that he realised the necessity to have positive results and to rescue the Tunisian Economy, whatever the method used to achieve that.²⁵⁸

In the first decade of independent Tunisia's existence an emerging crisis was to be resolved through the adoption of socialism in the economic sphere. Bourguiba's personal approach to politics had proved to be decisive in the acceptance of Ben Salah's advice about a change in policy. Ideology did not play a large part, for Bourguiba, in the decision in this matter, or in politics more generally. His lack of belief in an economic ideology appears to be the case. Shadli Iyyari reports a personal conversation with Bourguiba, where the latter said:

I am with any method that would lead to positive results and help the Tunisian society develop, regardless of its name. You just have to keep away from the Russian and Chinese models of Socialism, where there are suppressions of freedoms and social problem, which I do not accept. Then, you may even mix Socialism and Liberalism, if you like.²⁵⁹

Despite Bourguiba's authoritarian approach to all forms of political opposition, he rejected totalitarianism, based on the experience of Russia and China, for Tunisia. Political engineering was not to be undertaken as a matter of conviction. Rather, the problems in Tunisia required a pragmatic policy which borrowed from both socialism and liberalism. Bourguiba envisaged a form of socialism without the crucial dimension of class struggle

²⁵⁷ Author's interview with Mostafa al-Zaghouni, *the former Tunisian Minister of Planning during the rule of Bourguiba*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Author's interview with Shadli Iyyari, *the Former Minister of the Economy*. op cit.

which would lead to further divisions in his country.²⁶⁰

A few features of Tunisia's ruling party were changed at the Bizerta Conference in 1964 to reflect the new socialist philosophy. The Neo-Constitutional Party was renamed the Socialist Constitutional Party, to incorporate Bourguiba's acceptance of 'Tunisian' socialism and the Central Committee of the Party, that was independent from other socialist parties throughout the world.²⁶¹ What appears to be an ideological platform, which can be described as 'Bourguibaism', was born. The social inequalities dominating society were singled out for attack. The means of production were thus to be in the hands of the state in order to redistribute the wealth of Tunisia from the few to the many. Previous principles of economic liberalism, prior to 1963, were to be held back in light of the plans of this new socialist government.²⁶² However, policy failures tended to be laid at the doors of others. Scapegoats were blamed for mistakes in which Bourguiba himself was the instrumental factor.²⁶³ The lack of success of the socialist policies during the 1960s led to the removal of Ben Saleh, and he was put on trial in 1969.²⁶⁴

Conservative and Radical Regimes in Ideological Conflict

The seizure of power by Libyan military officers altered the nature of Libyan-Tunisian relations. Two factors can be cited to explain this new stage between these neighbours. Muammar Gaddafi's emergence at the head of the new regime changed Libya's foreign policy in line with the ideology of Arabism.²⁶⁵ Large revenues from oil were used to support a broader regional role.²⁶⁶ Consequently, Bourguiba took steps to foster closer bilateral relations with Libya. His neighbour was an important source of income for Tunisia, with guest-workers sending their remittances. The radical ideology adopted by Gaddafi needed to be curbed, and Bourguiba had hoped Libya would continue in its role as a buffer state

²⁶⁰ Habib Bourguiba, " *Al-Habib Bourguiba on Ishtirakiyyah, 1962-63*," Sami Ayad Hanna and George H. Gardner, *Arab Socialism: A Documentary Survey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 316-317. (p. 313-334)

²⁶¹ Author's interview with al-Baji Qaid El-Sabesi, *the former Minister of Foreign Affairs during the rule of Bourguiba*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁶² Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister*. Episode 3.op cit.

²⁶³ Author's interview with Ahmed al-Mastiri, *the Tunisian former Defence, Interior and Justice Minister*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁶⁴ Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior* (Tunis, Tunisia, 2012).

²⁶⁵ Author's interview with Moukhtar Zaghdoud, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁶⁶ Author's Interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. op cit.

between Tunisia and Egypt.²⁶⁷ However, the situation turned out to be quite the opposite. A series of crises plagued the relationship between Bourguiba and Gaddafi during their time in power.

Arabism was a strong force during the Cold War, both in republican states and monarchies. Naturally, relations between Libya and Tunisia were influenced by the ideological currents of the age. The 'Tunisian Nation', in post-independence Tunisia, was an expression of a trend which went against the prevailing political climate. Bourguiba and Bashir Ben Salama formulated this concept with the same connotations that were given by Arabists to Arab unity; a nation united by the same language or dialect, bringing all Tunisians together. A distinct dialect and the Maliki School of Islamic Law made Tunisia a nation in its own right, with both being in need of official state recognition.²⁶⁸ Narrowly defined nationalism, such as that of the 'Tunisian Nation', is a manifestation of the political settlement present in Arab countries.²⁶⁹ In Libya, under the Gaddafi regime, a pan-nationalist ideology was shaping and driving its foreign and domestic policies.²⁷⁰

It may be argued that Arab countries occupied a stage between the nation-state and Arab unity. Unsuccessful experiments at integration were accompanied by other problems. The failure to attain economic growth, security, development and political stability showed weaknesses among the Arabs. These problems persuaded the states in the region to look for new forms of inter-state co-operation, which sometimes failed due to internal and external challenges.²⁷¹ The narrow definition of the interests of the regime appears to have undermined the creation of durable and effective regional or bilateral relations among Arab countries.

The Maghreb was subjected to the above mentioned forces in weakening the push towards integration or co-operation. According to Hisham Hajji, the region is characterised by a set of countries, which are neither nation-states, nor are they united by a single supra-national state, as a result of the ideology espoused by political leaders. Integration was not the defining

²⁶⁷ Author's Interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. op cit.

²⁶⁸ B. Ben Salam, *The Historical Theory of the Tunisian Liberation Struggle* (Tunis, Tunisia: Abdel Karim Ben Adel Lah Institute, 1977). p.143.

²⁶⁹ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit.

²⁷⁰ Author's interview, 'anonymous', *the Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

²⁷¹ Author's interview with Abdullah al-Harrari, *the former Head of the Libyan side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee*. (Zaltin, Libya, 2013).

ideology, with the notion of the nation-state dominating Arab states.²⁷² A similar point of view was expressed by the President of the International Co-operation Department at the Libyan Ministry on the allegiances of officials and policy-makers in Libya. A sense of belonging to the country of origin influenced the attitudes of Tunisian and Libyan officials in regard to the actual process of bilateral relations. The President argued that:

These senses and attitudes were inconsistent with the principle of integration that was recommended by all institutions in the context of each of the two countries' bilateral relations; patriotism was characteristic of their behaviours and discourses.²⁷³

Despite the official narrative on pan-nationalism, the persistence of a narrowly conceived identity found its way into the practical dimensions of foreign policy. This is further confirmed by the following statement from the same interviewee:

While a petroleum and derivatives pipeline link between Libya and Tunisia was being studied by the preparatory committee, for instance, they discussed whether it would be in Libya's best interests to execute the installation only on the Libyan part, or whether it should also be involved in that on Tunisian land.²⁷⁴

Raison d'état appears to have influenced the ways in which Libyan-Tunisian relations were thought and spoken about. Immediate benefits to Libya, for decision-makers, involved reducing the possible effects of the oil pipeline project on Tunisia. Jamal al-Barq, a former senior official in the Libyan government, disagrees with this view of Libyan-Tunisian relations. Libyan debates and decisions contradicting bilateral interest were caused by the lack of studies which would have supplied information about the long-term economic and social benefits of joint projects. Such studies could have helped Libyan officials to make the right decisions.²⁷⁵ However, the interests of the nation-state obviously had a negative effect on Libyan-Tunisian relations.²⁷⁶ Nationalist sentiments that were opposed to the demands of pan-Arabism were widespread in the institutions of power.

²⁷² Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit.

²⁷³ Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *the Head of the Department of International Co-operation, on the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013). Op cit.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Author's interview with Jamal al-Barq, *the former President of the Libyan Side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian High Committee of Follow-Up*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

²⁷⁶ Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *the Head of the Department of International Co-operation, on the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy*. Op cit.

Nonetheless, the ideas of Arabism were inspiring both the general public and the regimes to pursue the dream of Arab unity. Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Libya were in the revolutionary camp. The advocates of the revolution demanded the end of the nation-state, to be replaced by a wider Arab nation.²⁷⁷ Conservative regimes, headed by Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, believed in gradual solutions to the Arab world's problems.²⁷⁸ Jamal Abdul Nasser's politics of Arabism and anti-colonialism appealed to the Libyan regime.²⁷⁹ This revolutionary struggle for Arabism and anti-colonialism continued until the late 1980s.²⁸⁰ Nasserism had a profound impact on the thinking of Libyan foreign policy-makers, and on Gaddafi in particular, concerning regional and international issues, for more than two decades. Libya's geographical location was recognised as a factor in foreign policy deliberations. This led Gaddafi to note:

Luckily enough that we, the Libyans, have joint borders with Arab countries and peoples from the East and from the West. This case makes us feel secure and safe. We still have our Northern borders, but despite their seriousness and vulnerability, they are not adjacent to a foreign country.²⁸¹

The Arab borders of Libya gave it a sense of security which was otherwise missing on its coastline. In the above statement, the assumption of a bond among Arab nations appears. Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt were regarded as natural allies. The political, economic and military capabilities of Libya were thus to be employed for the objectives of Gaddafi's foreign policy in light of this situation. The promotion of Arab unity was the ideological goal in a region of divided states. Arabism drove Libya's foreign policy in the Arab world.²⁸²

Political union with Egypt and Sudan, between 1970 and 1973, was a manifestation of Gaddafi's Arabism. However, the failures of integration motivated a change in direction by the Libyan regime with a shift in focus to the Maghreb. The Hassi Massaouh Agreement was signed with Algeria in 1973. The 'Islamic State', bringing Libya and Tunisia under a single state, was proposed in 1974. Mauritania also benefitted from Gaddafi's westward orientation

²⁷⁷ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist* op cit.

²⁷⁸ Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit.

²⁷⁹ Salim al-Barnawi, *Libyan Foreign Policy* (Tripoli Libya Economic Sciences Research Centre, 2000). p.211.

²⁸⁰ Omar al-Okali, 'Political Effects of the 1st of September Revolution on World Politics', Report . People's Committee for Foreign Relations (ed),(Tripoli, 2003). p.15.

²⁸¹ Muammar Gaddafi, 'Speech at the Libyan General People's Congress', *The Libyan National Record*, Volume 32. (Tripoli: Publications of the Green Book Studies, 2001). p.309.

²⁸² al-Hazaymeh, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of Some Arab Countries*. op cit. p.501.

for Arab unity, as it received financial aid. Socialist and resistance movements in Africa were also backed by Gaddafi during this period. The overall goal of anti-colonialism still influenced the Libyan regime. Revolutionary sentiments can be seen in the following statement from Gaddafi that:

We, the Libyans, in the People's Republic, have to lead a new stage in regional relations. Libya is in the middle of the Arab world; the East and the West of this world are the two wings of Libya. This is why the imperial and the Zionist powers focused on Libya, as the country has a major role in Africa, the Mediterranean Sea, Europe and the Arab countries.²⁸³

Foreign policy was not only restricted to the Arab world, but to broader concerns in international affairs. Gaddafi was aware of the need to locate Libya in the continuing struggle against anti-imperialism in the heart of the Middle East, Palestine, and throughout the world. I will discuss later how Bourguiba's ideas on Palestine represented a very different position from those of Gaddafi and other Arab leaders.

Conservative and revolutionary regimes had clashed on a number of foreign policy and domestic issues. The populist leaderships of Nasser and Gaddafi were based on the economic and political resources of their countries. Taher Bel Khoja observes that Nasser wanted to expand his leadership over the entire Arab world during Bourguiba's rule. Such an ambition was dependent on Egypt's political muscle and reputation. The goals and ideas of Nasser were widely welcomed and supported by many Arabs at the time. A more limited ambition to lead the Maghreb seems to have been entertained by Bourguiba in light of Tunisia's limited political and economic potentials.²⁸⁴ This ambition was given expression in the following speech, delivered on 10th December, 1958, at Sfax in Tunisia,

Tunisian and Libyan peoples are almost the same, and we consider ourselves to be part of the great nation of the Maghreb. We aim to form, with Libya, one nation

²⁸³Muammar Gaddafi, 'Speech at the Libyan General People's Congress', *The Libyan National Record*, Volume 32.op cit. p.306.

²⁸⁴Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*.op cit.

that has one police, one army and is under one flag.²⁸⁵

Interestingly, Bourguiba said these words before Gaddafi rose to power on the back of a coup against the Senoussi monarchy in Libya. King Idris I appear to have been a reliable partner, with whom a political union could take place. Further, Bourguiba's aspiration to lead the Maghreb was demonstrated in his reaction to Ahmed Ben Bella's first state visit to Egypt, rather than to Tunisia, after Algeria's independence. He only paused in Tunis Airport on his return, to proclaim: "We are Arabs", three times in front of officials and the people who had come to greet him. Such an announcement was understood to be a message of opposition to Bourguiba's ideas about the Tunisian nation and the Maghreb from Algeria's new revolutionary regime.²⁸⁶ Tunisia thus shared a border with a revolutionary regime in Algiers, to its west, and Nasserist Egypt, further east. Libya continued to provide some relief on the pressures of Arabism until the 1969 ousting of King Idris I.

However, Libya under Gaddafi still provided the opportunity for Bourguiba to work towards his pan-Maghreb dream. Mohammad Mzali, a former Prime Minister, cites Bourguiba's enthusiasm for Libyan-Tunisian unity in 1974. No consultations with ministers were carried out after Gaddafi suggested to his Tunisian counterpart that he should be the President of the political union between the countries, under the official title of the Islamic Arab Republic. A closed-door meeting between Bourguiba and Gaddafi, in January, 1974, led to the surprise announcement of the republic. His former Interior Minister describes the chain of events in the following sentences:

We were with the President on a tour of duty in Hammamet when the Tunisian Foreign Minister informed us that Gaddafi was in urgent need of meeting with President Habib Bourguiba. We thought there was a serious threat to the country's security and the Libyan Leader wanted to discuss the matter with him. We therefore decided to meet with him on the following day in Djerba, a city close to the Libyan border. The meeting carried the surprise, which was Gaddafi's proposal for unity between Tunisia and Libya, whereby Bourguiba would be the President of the two countries.²⁸⁷

Unification of Tunisia and Libya was a personal affair. The authoritarian leaders of both

²⁸⁵Habib Bourguiba, 'Speech by former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba ', (Sfax, Tunisia, 10th December, 1958).

²⁸⁶Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit.

²⁸⁷Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. Op cit.

states were able to make a decision with far reaching implications, not only for their nations but also for the wider Maghreb. This may explain Bourguiba's enthusiasm for the idea. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented itself for Bourguiba, who was aware that a combination of Libya's vast natural resources and Tunisia's know how would help to realise his pan-Maghreb dream. He regarded this union as a first step in the right direction.²⁸⁸ According to Mohamed Masmoudi,²⁸⁹ unification represented an opportunity for a form of integration between the two countries to take place. Tunisia's human resources and expertise, and Libya's financial muscle, would complement each other.²⁹⁰ At the same time, the agreement of a political union was perceived by some as not to be to the advantage of the Tunisian regime. Libya was attempting to take over Tunisia. The new republic failed a few days after the announcement was made. Its failure was largely due to the hasty nature of the decision by both countries' regimes, without either careful study, or a series of discussions on the issue.²⁹¹

Both the former Tunisian Vice-Foreign Minister and the Director of Tunisian Intelligence argued that the timing of the signing of the agreement was suspicious. Apparent haste was intended to add the false impression of spontaneity. Hedi Nour, then Prime Minister, was absent from the meetings and he was not notified of the details of the agreement.²⁹² Although Mohammad Masmoudi was aware of the proceedings, he states that the Djerba Agreement was prepared by the Libyan regime. Further, he denies having played a role in convincing Bourguiba to agree to the political union. A referendum was planned in Libya and Tunisia, either to accept or reject the proposal for the Islamic Arab Republic. However, the Tunisian Constitution did not allow such a move.²⁹³ Taher Bel Khoja believes the enthusiasm of the Libyans to achieve unity in a short period of time shows that the agreement was spontaneous.²⁹⁴ He stated further:

On January 14th, Khweldi al-Hamidi, the Libyan Interior Minister at that time,

²⁸⁸ Ahmad Mansour, Interview with Minister Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister*, Aljazeera News, 'The witness to the era', television programme, 2000. Episode 4.

²⁸⁹ Mohamed Masmoudi, who was the Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1970 – 1974, is considered to be one of the founders of the Unity between Tunisia and Libya, the agreement to which was signed on January 12th, 1974. He was then appointed Deputy Prime Minister of the Arab Islamic Republic, which was recommended by the agreement. Nevertheless, the failure of that Unity led to his removal from office.

²⁹⁰ Author's interview with Mohamed Masmoudi, *the former Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs*. (Mahdia, Tunisia, 2013).

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Author's interview, 'anonymous', *the former Tunisian Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. (Tunis Tunisia, 2013).

²⁹³ Author's interview with Mohamed Masmoudi, *the former Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

²⁹⁴ Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. Op cit.

come to me with a model of the referendum and the new country's flag. This rapid rush to complete the procedures and to make the agreement a legitimate document was accompanied by public movements, as illustrated by a public march. This one was organised by the Libyan regime and it started from Tripoli to Tunis, on purpose to express support for Bourguiba, as the President of the new state.²⁹⁵

The chance for a political union appears to have been a product of both long-term and short-term factors. Gaddafi's persistent willingness to pursue a pan-Arab project with other heads of state played an important role in creating the impetus for unification with Tunisia.

Bourguiba's Political Allies and the Revoking of a Union

Opposition from conservatives appears to have led to Bourguiba's consequent revoking of the agreement to union.²⁹⁶ Intellectuals and politicians close to the President were not happy with the speed and nature of the events surrounding the Djerba meetings. Hedi Noura and Wassila Ammar, Tunisia's first lady, were prominent figures in this group. Scepticism within Tunisia's political elite towards revolutionary ideologies or statesmen, which were espoused by Bourguiba himself, pushed many to oppose the newly proposed republic, despite the fact that their President would be its head of state. The fear that Tunisia would be swallowed up by revolutionary regimes in other countries generated a reaction: that the speedy push for unity should not be accepted.²⁹⁷

Verbal confrontations took place between Noura and Masmoudi at a ministerial meeting. Further, the Chairman of the meeting singled out the hasty speed of the signing of the agreement, and he held Masmoudi personally responsible for the event.²⁹⁸ The Interior Minister, at that time, prevented a pro-unity march, beginning from Tripoli, from entering Tunis. It subsequently remained close to the Libyan-Tunisian border.²⁹⁹ Tunisia's conservative elite passionately rejected union with Libya, and a previous attempt to unite with Algeria. Bourguiba had himself rejected Algeria's offer for unification in 1973.³⁰⁰ The dismissive attitude held by Bourguiba is reported by Taher Bel Khoja:

²⁹⁵Ibid.

²⁹⁶Author's interview with Mohamed Masmoudi, *the former Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

²⁹⁷Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit.

²⁹⁸Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister*'. Episode 4. Op cit.

²⁹⁹Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister*'. Episode 4. Op cit.

³⁰⁰Ibid.

The Algerian Former President, Houari Boumediene, met with Bourguiba in May, 1973, in El Kef, Tunisia, where he proposed unity between the two countries, be it in a con-federal or federal form. It was a similar offer to what Bourguiba had called for 13 years previously, precisely on October 7th, 1960. He declared that Tunisia would support Algeria in its struggle against the French occupation in order to be able, after liberation, to develop democratic legitimacy and to pave the way for establishing Unity, be it as a confederation, a federation, or in any other form. These were evidently the same words as those of President Boumediene, but Bourguiba cleverly obviated them by saying: “Mr. President, Algeria is large, while Tunisia is small, so why don’t we go back in time to adopt the borders the way they used to be before — why don’t you give me Constantinople as a whole?”³⁰¹

A changed context had produced a rejection of the Algerian proposal for unity. Socialist Algeria was allied to Nasserist Egypt in the 1960s. While Bourguiba was not prepared to share power with the one-party state governing neighbouring Algeria, the relatively new Gaddafi regime appears to have presented a chance for him to be the elder statesman. Further, the new rulers of Algeria were the anti-colonial fighters from the National Liberation Front, which reinvented itself as the national army. Bourguiba distrusted military interference in politics. He had expected the rise of a civilian regime after the bloody anti-colonial struggle in France's last colony in the Maghreb. Instead, Ahmed Ben Bella headed a revolutionary regime, only to be ousted by Houari Boumediene, with a military dictatorship acquiring power.

The conservative political elite in Tunis were deeply suspicious of the radical ideologies of the age. Repeated warnings from Bourguiba's closest allies in Tunisia led to a distancing from Gaddafi's political activities. The fear that radical Libya would devour Tunisia seems to have been confirmed by Gaddafi's dual positions as Vice-President and Defense Minister of the Islamic Arab Republic, as a prelude to a coup d'état. Bourguiba's newly found caution drew upon his fear of the army, and from Gaddafi's history of coups.³⁰² Nour -Eddin al-Alawi noted that:

It may be commonly believed that Bourguiba was not in favour of this unity, but

³⁰¹ Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. Op cit.

³⁰² Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*. Op cit.

he could not reject such a generous proposal, made by Gaddafi, because he thought it would serve to realise his dream of leadership of the Maghreb afterwards.³⁰³

It seems Bourguiba and Gaddafi might have been able to work together, for however brief an association, towards a pan-nationalist goal. Different objectives motivated the actions of both men in their project to expand their political influence and control. The context of the Maghreb provided opportunities to develop or restrict the likelihood of various types of co-operation between regimes, or even of political union. However, the vision of the future adopted by conservative leaders like Bourguiba, described by his supporters as 'rationalism', clashed with the perceived excessive 'revolutionism' of Gaddafi and his fellow statesmen.³⁰⁴ Controversial issues, such as Palestine, Arab unity and socialist revolution, continued to divide Arab states.

Algeria's Rejection of the Islamic Arab Republic

Algeria's position as a regional power in the Maghreb led it to view the proposed union of Libya and Algeria as a threat. As a result, relations between Tunisia and Algeria were filled with tensions following the Djerba Agreement. Boumediene refused to receive Taher Bel Khoja and al-Habib al-Shatti, in their capacity as Bourguiba's official envoys.³⁰⁵ The opposition of Algeria to the Libyan-Tunisian union, for a former chairman of the Neo-Constitutional Party, was also a major reason for its failure.³⁰⁶ Further, the offer extended to Boumediene to join the union was met with rejection, since he said: "Algeria does not get on a moving train. It gets on trains before they start up".³⁰⁷ Ahmed Bannour observes that the Tunisian President did not expect Boumediene to oppose the union between Libya and Tunisia. Boumediene is reported to have warned his counterpart in Tunis that "They had better consult me before signing that agreement. This unity between you and Libya will not succeed".³⁰⁸ The Algerian position was not simply a rejection of being part of the Islamic Arab Republic, but was against its very existence, which led to Bourguiba to revisit his initial

³⁰³ Author's interview with Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *the Tunisian Thinker and University Professor of Sociology*. Op cit.

³⁰⁴ Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2011). Op cit.

³⁰⁵ Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit.

³⁰⁶ Author's interview with Mohamed Siyah, *the former President of the Tunisian Destour Party*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*. Op cit.

eagerness for the agreement.³⁰⁹

External and internal obstacles to the agreement signed at Djerba were too strong for Tunisian-Libya co-operation to rapidly develop into a union with a single state. A turning point had come when the union was abrogated soon afterwards. Two ideological systems, with high stakes for the survival of the nation-state in the case of Tunisia, and Gaddafi's political expansion of pan-Arabism, proved to be incompatible. In his book *Nasibi Min Al-hayat* (My Share of Life), Mohamed Mzali explained "that it was impossible to continue to such a hasty unity; the ideological differences at the economic, social and political levels were not taken into consideration while signing it." However, Bourguiba's pan-Maghrebi vision also fell victim to the intrigue of his own allies and Algerian pressure.

Jericho's Palestine Solution

The famous speech³¹⁰ delivered by Bourguiba at Jericho in 1965 is perhaps the strongest indication, for his supporters, that he was a 'realistic' leader. Israel's superior military and political power, aided by the West, was recognised.³¹¹ A solution based on the relative weaknesses of the Palestinians thus needed to be put forward in such a situation. Palestinians had to finally accept the partition of Palestine that had been stipulated in United Nations' resolutions.³¹² Israel's recognition was part of a broader process of negotiation in a "get and demand" policy.³¹³ Previously, Bourguiba had proposed the same idea at the first 1964 Arab Summit, without provoking any objections from his fellow Arab leaders, according to Mohammad Sayeh, who accompanied him to Cairo. Sayeh claimed that Tunisia's President was of the view that the Palestinians needed to rely on themselves and not on Arab armies to solve the issue of occupation. "A set of phases" had to be formulated, pursuing a strategy

³⁰⁹ Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister*'. Episode 4. Op cit

³¹⁰ This was the speech delivered by Habib Bourguiba in Jericho on March 3rd, 1965, where he explained his approach to solving the Palestine issue. He addressed the Palestinians saying: "you are refugees and live in tents for now. It is neither through hollow speeches nor meaningless slogans that you will improve your statuses and retrieve your land, but through political action". It was thus the introduction to his idea of clinging to international legitimacy and pursuing an armed struggle within Palestine. This speech was met with public and official Arabic disapproval, and demonstrations developed until the Tunisian Embassy in Egypt was set on fire.

³¹¹ Author's interview with Ali Mahjoubi, *the Historian and Researcher*. op cit.

³¹² Author's interview with Mohamed Siyah, *the former President of the Tunisian Destour Party*. Op cit .

³¹³ This was a method adopted by Bourguiba, as the leader of the Tunisian National Movement, during the armed struggle for independence. According to this tactic, it was recommended that a gradual claim for liberation be followed, in order to achieve internal independence first, then to reach complete independence from France (in 1956). The stages policy means setting hands on what was reachable at the current stage, and being prepared for what would come next.

between diplomacy and armed struggle.³¹⁴ Another visit to Cairo, before the Jericho speech, saw Bourguiba put forward his Palestinian proposal to Nasser, who reputedly accepted it and promised political support. Tahir Bel Khoja had accompanied Bourguiba and reports the following conversation between the Tunisian and Egyptian Presidents:

“Concerning the Palestinian issue, I think, out of good politics, we should cling to international legitimacy. Because of the Zionist propaganda, the world believes that Israel is a small nation being surrounded by a large Arab army. If the Arabs cling to the solution proposed in the partition resolution, we will seem to the world to be a nation committed to international legitimacy. Afterwards, we would urge the Palestinians to engage in the armed struggle without getting a single Arab soldier involved; we will support them financially and diplomatically.” said Bourguiba. “If you show interest in this strategy, maybe Arab public opinion will support you” he added. Nasser replied that you (Bourguiba) could propose those ideas. “Do you mind if I propose these ideas, not here, in Cairo, but in Palestine?” Bourguiba then asked. “You could do that, and we will support you” Nasser replied.³¹⁵

This solution to the 'Palestinian issue' was understood on a world stage that was slanted against the Arabs, and the Palestinians in particular. Interestingly, Bourguiba also suggests a form of pan-Arab support for Palestinian efforts to liberate their lands without direct military intervention. Nasser's reply appears to be receptive of the proposal's contents. A letter was sent by Bourguiba to Nasser on 29th April, 1965, discussing further the proposal and responding to the criticism generated in the media about it. In the letter, Bourguiba recommends that:

We should thoroughly plan our political actions; words alone, as I have already stated, do not yield positive results. We must gain supporters and prepare international public opinion to support us in one way or another. Therefore, I have proposed approving the United Nations' Resolution that recommended the refugees return to their homeland and Israel renounce an important part of

³¹⁴Author's Interview with Mohamed Siyah, *the former President of the Tunisian Destour Party*. op cit. (He was among those who escorted Bourguiba to the Arab Summit in 1964.

³¹⁵Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit

Palestine.³¹⁶

Another excerpt states,

I was certain, and events proved it, that the great powers would condemn reprobate Israel's rejection to abide by the United Nations' Resolutions. Hence, that would lead to the Arabs' implicit victory and shake the ground under Zionist colonialism; this rejection would rupture the relationship between Israel and its supporters. This situation would culminate in either of two scenarios: In Scenario One, which is a far-fetched one, Israel would eventually approve the resolutions of the international organisation. In this way, Israel would consent for the refugees to return to their homeland and it would give up a part of the land it occupies. The situation will thus change in favour of the Arabs, and a new possibility to solve the issue will be created. In Scenario 2, which is the most likely to occur, Israel would insist on rejecting the resolution and then the Arabs would be stronger in case a war breaks out.³¹⁷

Bourguiba appears to have been aware of the international balance of power against the cause of the Palestinians. The international community can be a source of strength. Exclusive reliance on Arab states or military force would not deliver the desired goals for the liberation of Palestine. While Bourguiba is very explicit about condemning "Zionist colonialism", he also advocated a radical compromise: mutual recognition of the states of Israel and Palestine.³¹⁸ An unresolved contradiction emerges in light of the seeming inability of the Arab states to defeat Israel on the battlefield before the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973.

Ordinary Arabs had rejected Bourguiba's declarations in a very public show of demonstrations in the cities and towns of the Arab world. Newspaper columns attacked the Tunisian President. Influential radio stations, such as the Cairo station (Idaat al-Qahira) and the Voice of the Arabs (Sawt al-Arab), also broadcast stinging criticisms. Bourguiba's scheduled visit to Iraq was cancelled following the Iraqi government's message that it could

³¹⁶Habib Bourguiba, 'Letter from Bourguiba To Nasser the President of United Arab Republic', (1965). For more details, see http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/Behoth/Siasia21/Borkeba/mol04.doc_cvt.htm#_ftnref2. accessed 23/04/2014.

³¹⁷Ibid.

³¹⁸Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit.

not guarantee his safety.³¹⁹ A severe backlash was generated across most sections of the Arab media. Popular feelings against Israel dominated the Arab world with the frontline states, Egypt, Syria and Jordan, being officially at war with Israel. Slogans such as 'throw Israel into the sea', besides others, were loudly proclaimed in campaigns about nationalist issues. The revolutionary camp, led by Nasser, after witnessing the reaction against Bourguiba, appears to have turned away completely from the prospect of the recognition of Israel. Instead, Bourguiba's proposal was understood to accept Israel as a state built on the ruins of Palestine, and therefore as a message of submission to the enemy. The armed struggle to liberate all the territory of Palestine was to be carried out through the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, a newly founded movement, backed by the Arab states.³²⁰

A Failed Coup Against Bourguiba

I previously mentioned the failed 1963 coup d'état against Bourguiba, and the consequent changes introduced to his regime. The Tunisian armed forces were thus removed from the political arena. Military officers did not receive any ministerial positions. Civilian politicians were to fill the post of Defence Minister. A standing force of 20,000 soldiers was maintained. Battalions and units were stationed in the countryside to undertake civic projects, including building roads and infrastructure.³²¹ Mohammad Mzali notes:

Bourguiba's extreme caution was clearly manifested in the constant watch he kept over officers and their political affiliations; he dismissed those who represented a threat. This scrutiny of military affairs was accompanied by negligence in developing the Tunisian Army, so as to ensure it was less powerful and was incapable of playing any effective role in internal political life. Indeed, the Tunisian Army had a modest budget in comparison with the budgets of some of the Arab regimes' armies; only 5% of the country's general budget was allocated to it, because Bourguiba had always been of the opinion that "the army's place is in the barracks, not in political life."³²²

The regime headed by Bourguiba viewed the military, from a political viewpoint, to require strict control. Constant surveillance of military officers was a key part of a broader authoritarian strategy in a country where political parties were banned, and no opposition was

³¹⁹ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*. op cit

³²⁰ Jamal Abdel Nasser, 'speech by Former President of Egypt Jamal Abdel Nasser at the Worker Festival ', (Cairo, 1st May, 1965).

³²¹ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*. op cit

³²² Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the former Tunisian Prime Minister*'. Episode 3. op cit.

tolerated. As a result, Bourguiba sought to weaken the army's ability to act against him, thereby avoiding any future coup d'états. The army was underdeveloped in terms of manpower and equipment. A separation between politics and the army was implemented.

Suspicion of Gaddafi and Nasser's Military Backgrounds

Bourguiba's fear of military interference in the security of his regime also included those of other countries. His experience of the 1963 coup caused him to distrust the military regimes of Arab states in the Maghreb and Mashreq. The Tunisian leader felt superior in his awareness of being the only civilian leader in the Arab world, as opposed to the seizure of power by Nasser and Gaddafi through military coups.³²³ Relations with Gaddafi are described, by Salah-eddin al-Jamali, to have been based on the fact that:

Bourguiba believed that the Maghrebi leaders had no convincing political vision and lacked political experience due to their military backgrounds, he was scornful of them. His behaviour towards them, in general, and to Gaddafi in particular, was inconsistent with the norms and behaviours of diplomacy which were commonly followed in inter-Presidential relations, which did not please Gaddafi.³²⁴

Involvement in Tunisia's anti-colonial struggle and his subsequent period in the position of President appear to have given Bourguiba the confidence to dismiss other forms of authoritarian rule. The above description of the relations between Bourguiba and Gaddafi indicates a complex situation where personalities appear to be more important than governments or ideology. Gaddafi's speech at Palmarium,³²⁵ attacking the USA, provoked a stern reaction from Bourguiba, in an expression of his seniority. The Palmarium speech was a clear demonstration of the differing ideological views that were dominant in Tunisia and Libya. Gaddafi's own pronouncements on Arab unity and the West were being watched live by Bourguiba, who decided to immediately head to the stage and to voice his own opinions. The leader of Tunisia began to criticise the notion of Arab unity, and this was directed at

³²³ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. op cit.

³²⁴ Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. Op cit.

³²⁵ This is a well-known theatre hall in Avenue Habib Bourguiba, which is located in the centre of Tunis, Tunisia. It was the hall where Gaddafi delivered his speech in 1973, where he uttered his famous saying: "To hell, America" (toz fi amrika). In a reaction that lacked the diplomatic manners that were commonly followed in inter-Presidential settings, Bourguiba asserted that Gaddafi's behaviour was a stupidity. This speech negatively impacted on the interpersonal relations between the two leaders, on the small scale, and subsequently between the two countries, on the large scale.

Gaddafi himself.³²⁶ Subsequently, Gaddafi harboured a grudge against Bourguiba. Inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya suffered from an emerging personal rivalry between these heads of state. Palmarium publicly confirmed Bourguiba's dislike of pan-Arabism. Further, it was an indication that he feared the presence of the revolutionary regimes bordering Tunisia, namely, Libya and Algeria.³²⁷

Abdul Razzaq al-Mathelouthi, a former Tunisian Consul to Libya, observes Bourguiba's parental intentions to share his experience with the 29 year old Gaddafi, who was a graduate of the Libyan Military School.³²⁸ In the Maghreb, the President of Tunisia was happy to play the part of the elder statesman. Military regimes were unable to run the countries under their control. Further, a military background could not be a substitute for political experience. Nonetheless, Bourguiba was wary of Gaddafi, due to his own experience with the Tunisian army and the latter's demands that the elderly heads of state in the Maghreb should leave power to make way for younger leaders espousing Nasserist ideals.³²⁹ An ideological clash, which I noted earlier, between conservative and revolutionary Arab regimes seems to have created tensions between the Tunisian and Libyan leaders. Salah-eddin al-Jamali argued that:

In addition to his great ambitions, both inside and outside Libya, Gaddafi never accepted discussion and always held to his opinions — we were actually in an ideological conflict with him. He did not want to be close to Bourguiba and was influenced by the revolutionary thinking of the Egyptian President, Jamal Abdul Nasser, especially after the latter's famous speech in Libya. In this speech, he declared Gaddafi to be the Secretary General of Arab Revolutionism and/or Nationalism, which greatly affected his personality. Gaddafi always fanatically believed his thoughts to be the right ones, which explains his tragic end.³³⁰

It is important to note that Gaddafi was no less authoritarian than Bourguiba. His socialist policies in Libya forced political parties and the private sector to the margins of society. Direct and personal acts of power replaced the machinery of the state. Gaddafi's pan-Arabist beliefs, under the influence of Nasser, thus also meant that it became the official ideology of

³²⁶Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister, Mohamed Mzali*. Episode 4. Op cit.

³²⁷Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. Op cit.

³²⁸Author's interview with Abdul Razzaq al-Mathelouthi, *the former Tunisian Consul to Libya*, (Benghazi, Libya, 2011).

³²⁹Author's interview, 'anonymous', *the Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

³³⁰Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. op cit.

Libya. Gaddafi's military background and revolutionary ideals stood in stark contrast to Bourguiba's liberal convictions.³³¹ Arabism, in this period, was embodied in the person of Nasser. Anwar al-Sadat's succession to the Egyptian Presidency fell extremely short of his predecessor's charisma and convictions in the area of ideology. In this context, Gaddafi saw himself, confirmed by Nasser's speech in Libya, as the young revolutionary who was to be the next leader of the Arabs, to carry the flag of Arabism. As a result, the Libyan leader became a relentless advocate of Arab unity for almost twenty years.

A former Secretary of State in the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes Bourguiba's approach to have been a case-by-case one, seeking to serve Tunisia's interests in various spheres, especially the economy. The Libyan leader was strongly influenced by socialist ideas of populist revolution and the immediate redistribution of wealth, which had contributed to a deterioration in relations with his neighbours and with Tunisia.³³² In 1970, the Tunisian National Progressive Front was formed to oppose Bourguiba's control over Tunisia. A revolutionary agenda reflecting Youssefism characterised this group, which enjoyed Gaddafi's backing.³³³ Members were also involved in the section of Arab action within the liaison office of the Revolutionary Committees³³⁴, charged with providing support to Tunisian opposition groups.³³⁵

³³¹ Author's interview with Abdul Razzaq al-Mathelouthi, *the former Tunisian Consul to Libya*. op cit

³³² Author's interview, 'anonymous', *the former Tunisian Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

³³³ Youssefism acquired its name from the eponymous Selah Ben Youssef, who was a Tunisian Leader. It included the currents of thinking, political parties, unionist organisations, patriotic and other revolutionary adherents, who believed in armed struggle as the right way to liberate the land from French Colonialism. A clash broke out in light of the ideological conflict between the Neo-Destour Party, presided over by Bourguiba, which vehemently advocated reaching a political settlement with the French Colonial powers, and the party under the Secretary General, Selah Ben Youssef, which was equally opposed to that kind of settlement. Youssefism is a manifestation of the crisis which the Tunisian National Movement faced after independence, leading to the greatest rupture within the Neo-Destour Party. It was then revealed that this organisation was not a political party with a clear programme or a fixed doctrine, as was the "National Movement", around which dissimilar currents got together.

³³⁴ This is the office that regulated the work and activities of the Libyan Revolutionary Committees, which were founded by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in 1977. From then until 2007, Mohamed Majdoub Gaddafi was President of this office, before he was succeeded by Omar Ashkal Gaddafi, who was its President until 2011. Both are cousins of Gaddafi. The office contains two departments; one specialises in working inside Libya, and it is known as the Department of Inner Workings, while the other specialises in working outside Libya, and is known as the Department of Outside Work.

³³⁵ Author's interview with Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *the Tunisian Thinker and University Professor of Sociology*. Op cit.

Crisis in Gafsa

Events at Gafsa represent a major deterioration between Tunisia and Libya in the Maghreb. The capture of the Tunisian town by militants occurred in January, 1980, in a context where Gaddafi provided support to Bourguiba's opposition. About 40 Tunisians, who had been trained in Libyan camps and then moved to Italian and later Algerian camps, infiltrated the country through the Tunisian-Algerian border. According to their confessions during interrogation, their plan was to seize the security headquarters and army camps in Gafsa when the clock struck midnight, marking the beginning of January 26th, 1980. They expected to receive popular support and thus a revolution would commence, ending Bourguiba's regime.³³⁶ Despite these stated intentions, the Tunisian security services and the army managed to chase out and catch the would-be revolutionaries in the southern parts of the country.

Exclusive blame placed on Libya appears to have hidden Algerian involvement in Gafsa. Nour -Eddin al-Alawi argued that the commander of the raid had links to, and was connected with, the Algerian intelligence services. Further corroboration of this suspicion of Algiers' complicity comes from Azzeddin al-Sherif, who admitted relations between his group and the Algerian authorities, including its intelligence arm. Close links were established in the process of transporting weapons via Algeria from Libya to Polisario fighters struggling against the Moroccan government in the Western Sahara.³³⁷ Algerian intelligence services were believed, by Nour -Eddin al-Alawi, to have helped in facilitating the entry of the Gafsa attackers through Algeria to Tunisia.³³⁸ Interestingly, the revelation that Libyan and Algerian intelligence services were involved in the incident did not lead to Tunisian investigations against Algeria, due to the desire not to have two opposing states at the same time.³³⁹ In this period, for Hisham Hajji, Algeria's support of Libya in the Arab League is another indication of the former's complicity. Tunisia's request to convene an Arab Summit to discuss the Gafsa incident and to impose resolutions against Libya, was met with failure.³⁴⁰ Libya's foreign minister refuted Tunisian allegations of involvement at a meeting of foreign ministers for the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, which represented the revolutionary camp, including

³³⁶Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister* '. Episode 4. Op cit.

³³⁷ Author's interview with Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *the Tunisian Thinker and University Professor of Sociology*. Op cit.

³³⁸Ibid.

³³⁹Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit

Algeria, in the Arab League.³⁴¹

Libya's offer of support in the armed rebellion against Bourguiba in Gafsa could be understood to be the peak of Libyan hostility against the Tunisian ruling regime.³⁴² A great rift was thus created. An exchange of accusations in the national media of these two countries eventually led to a severing of relations. Tunisia's inability to contain the regional ambitions of the Libyan regime became apparent. Previous relations with Libya under the Senoussi monarchy were generally not antagonistic. Both states respected the other's sovereignty to act freely within their borders. Further, Libya acted as a buffer state to the revolutionary policies of Nasserist Egypt in an ideological rivalry that was accompanied by conflict and contention.³⁴³ Tunisia's close relationship with the West also became clear as a result of the chain of events emerging after the Gafsa incident. Military support arrived from France and the USA, with the former moving its warships and the latter moving its Sixth Fleet close to the Tunisian coastline, in case of Libyan aggression.³⁴⁴

The failure of the Islamic Arab Republic was perhaps the most important factor in creating a tension-filled atmosphere with mutual conspiracies that were produced by both regimes, and particularly those of Gaddafi.³⁴⁵ An assassination attempt on Hedi Nour in 1978 can be seen as part of the wider fallout between the two states over the proposed political union between them a few years previously. Libya worked towards regime change, according to Taher Bel Khoja, exploiting a precarious period in Tunisia's domestic scene, e.g., the conflict between the government and the trade unions in 1978. A string of economic crises afflicting Tunisia presented opportunities for Gaddafi to encourage rebellion among the country's population. In 1976, thousands of workers were expelled back to Tunisia from Libya. Negotiations were rejected by the Gaddafi regime regarding Libyan-Tunisian disputed territorial waters, which contained large deposits of oil.³⁴⁶

The interaction of external and internal factors compelled Bourguiba to act to maintain the stability of the regime. Daoui Henbilia, the Minister of the Interior, was removed and replaced

³⁴¹ The Steadfastness and Confrontation Front was founded in 1977, following the visit of the former Egyptian President to Israel. This Front consisted of the revolutionary Arab countries, including Libya, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). These countries opposed Egypt's approach to peace with Israel.

³⁴² Author's interview with Moukhtar Zaghdoud, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit

³⁴³ Author's interview with Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *the Tunisian thinker and University Professor of Sociology*. Op cit.

³⁴⁴ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the Former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*. Op cit

³⁴⁵ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit

³⁴⁶ Author's interview with Taher Bel Khoja, *the Former Tunisian Minister of the Interior*. op cit.

by Idris Gaga.³⁴⁷ Despite Nour's disapproval of the choice of the new minister, Gaga close relationship with Tunisia's First Lady was perhaps a factor in his appointment.³⁴⁸ Nour's stroke led to the dissolution of the government, with Mohammad Mzali becoming Prime Minister in 1980.³⁴⁹ The attempt to defuse the internal situation in Tunisia motivated Bourguiba to release political prisoners, in a public show of reform. Mzali represented the 'pan-Arab' trend in the country. His appointment to the office of Prime Minister allowed him to implement an Arabisation programme of the educational system.³⁵⁰

A New Chapter of Co-operation between Ben Ali's Tunisia and Gaddafi's Libya

In the final years of Bourguiba's reign, Gaddafi worked towards de-stabilising his neighbour's regime. In 1986, Tunisian workers in Libya were expelled at a time of economic crisis, leading to a worsening of the situation in Tunisia and the eventual overthrow of Bourguiba in the following year.³⁵¹ A new regime in Tunis changed the country's political direction. Foreign policy was also affected as a result of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali becoming President. A departure from the previous Bourguiba years on the matter of Islam appears to have been the new regime's intention. The first year of Ben Ali's reign was filled with mention of this new orientation in Tunisia's domestic and foreign policies.

We tried to maintain the link between the internal and external politics of our country. The Tunisian diplomatic efforts should reflect the new changes, including the Arab-Islamic identity, the affiliation in Africa and the interests of our people, especially their noble values.³⁵²

Three areas of activity were identified, and a tight bond between the internal affairs and inter-state relations of Tunisia. Islam, Africa, and the Tunisian national interest were to be combined. A distrust of international politics was not present in Ben Ali's initial rhetoric. Instead, a high level of confidence was displayed in Tunisia's ability to adapt to a new context. Further, public demands for the greater recognition of Islam in society and in politics

³⁴⁷ Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *The Events of Gafsa: An Analytic Study of the Reasons and Results*, (University of Al-Manar, Tunisia 1995).

³⁴⁸ Mansour, Interview with Mohamed Mzali, *the Former Tunisian Prime Minister* '. Op cit

³⁴⁹ Ibid..

³⁵⁰ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, *the former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence* '. Op cit

³⁵¹ Author's interview with Abdul Razzaq al-Mathelouthi, *the former Tunisian Consul to Libya*. Op cit

³⁵² Ben Ali, 'Speech by President to the Tunisian Constitutional Party'. op cit.

were evident. The new government may have tried to respond to this pressure through co-opting religious symbolism. There was renewed interest in the importance of Arab culture and Islam in the political stability of the country.³⁵³ Previous isolation in international affairs was now to be replaced by active engagement. The regional and global contexts of Tunisia were equally important in setting the priorities of its foreign policy. Ben Ali's changes to Tunisian foreign policy generated opposition. These changes did not produce the expected political and economic results on the ground.³⁵⁴ Further, no genuine shift from the previous era's stances on the world stage had taken place. Relations with other Arab states and societies also continued. Despite the Islamic and Arab rhetoric on various issues, Tunisia's secular politics still dominated. A narrowly defined Tunisian nation-state defined Ben Ali's regime.³⁵⁵

Political relations with other states in the Maghreb lacked the suspicion displayed by Bourguiba. Previous fears of military rulers and popular revolution disappeared. Libya was welcomed as a close ally. The new Tunisian leader emphasised that Libya was the strategic extension of Arab and Muslim Tunisia.³⁵⁶ Improved inter-state relations were driven by good interpersonal relationships between Ben Ali and Gaddafi. Libyan ministers, such as Khweldi al-Hamidi and Baghdadi Mahmudi, played a constructive role on many occasions to improve Libyan-Tunisian ties.³⁵⁷ Shared interests, based on security concerns and the ruling families, inspired moves towards the stability underpinning their bilateral relations.³⁵⁸ The political survival of the Gaddafis and the Trabelsi-Ben Alis was a priority. Family members were placed in positions of political authority and economic importance. The inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya were thus family affairs.

In Tunisia, Ben Ali's new regime was influenced by nationalism, which not did exclude working with neighbours. The establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989 appears to confirm this view.³⁵⁹ Interestingly, he was considered by some to be a product of the Libyan political leadership. In the Djerba Agreement, Gaddafi suggested that Ben Ali occupy a

³⁵³Ibid.

³⁵⁴Al-Harith Mazyodat, 'Alternative Foreign Policy', *International Studies Journal*, 31 (1989).p 18.

³⁵⁵al-Hazmi, 'Maintaining the Achievements of Tunisia on the 54th Anniversary of Independence'. op cit, p.17.

³⁵⁶Ben Ali,'Speech by President to the Tunisian Constitutional Party' op cit.

³⁵⁷Author's interview, 'anonymous', *the Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit

³⁵⁸Author's interview with Abdullah al-Harrari, *the former Head of the Libyan side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee*. op cit.

³⁵⁹Author's interview with Moukhtar Zaghdoud, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*.op cit.

position as a security official in the unity government.³⁶⁰ The preceding explanations about Ben Ali's enthusiasm for the AMU and his rise to power are debatable, of course. Salah-eddin al-Jamali dismisses the possibility that Ben Ali was a product of the Libyan intelligence services. Precautionary security measures were adopted by both countries in the period when Ben Ali was General Director of National Security. Tunisia's security apparatus made great efforts to monitor pro-Gaddafi agents within its territories.³⁶¹ Similarly, Hisham Hajji argues that Ben Ali did not hold Gaddafi's revolutionary and nationalist ideas. However, he was not against Arabism in the same way Bourguiba had been.³⁶² Various explanations have been suggested to identify the factors motivating Ben Ali to pursue an improvement in Libyan-Tunisian relations. Ben Ali's goal of working towards the realization of Tunisia's national interests appears to be common ground between them. Political, economic and financial interests governed the new relationship, with each leader trying to benefit the most from it.³⁶³

The succession of Ben Ali did not bring a revolutionary ideology that sought to redraw the borders of the Maghreb. Rather, the new regime was concerned with maintaining the existing state in Tunisia. During the international embargo imposed on Libya, Ben Ali acted as an intermediary between his neighbour and the West.³⁶⁴ Better relations among the states of the Maghreb, based on the mutual self-interest of their political elites, appear to have replaced ideology and personal disagreements. The authoritarian nature of the state in Tunisia and Libya allowed such a reversal of relations from those of the Bourguiba era in their inter-state relations. Egyptian efforts to mediate were also present. However, Libya preferred Tunisian mediation, e.g., in the diplomatic crisis involving France's accusation that Libya was behind the French airline UTA crash in Niger.³⁶⁵ This choice was made, according to Hisham Hajji, in light of the negative consequences emerging from the military contribution of Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt, to Western intervention in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.³⁶⁶ Tunisia did not oppose Libya's points of view on some issues which were extremely sensitive for its regime.³⁶⁷ The First Gulf War was such an example where:

³⁶⁰ Author's interview with Ahmed Bannour, the *Former General Director of Tunisian Intelligence*. Op cit.

³⁶¹ Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali, the *former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. Op cit.

³⁶² Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, the *Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit.

³⁶³ *ibid*.

³⁶⁴ Author's interview, 'anonymous', the *former Libyan Ambassador to Tunisia*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

³⁶⁵ Interview, 'anonymous', the *Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

³⁶⁶ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, a *Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit.

³⁶⁷ Interview 'anonymous', the *Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

The invasion of Iraq in 1990, and the consequent international intervention, did put Tunisia in a predicament concerning its regional relations and those with Arab countries. Therefore, it decided not to attend the Arab Summit, which was held in Cairo, so that it would avoid conflicts with countries in its regional surroundings.³⁶⁸

Concerning the campaign to generate support for Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, the disadvantages outweighed the advantages of joining it. Inter-state relations within the Maghreb were given priority over those of the Gulf or the West. Egypt's participation and approval of this intervention were not received well by Gaddafi.

Tunisia also provided relief for Libya's internationally-imposed blockade between 1994 and 2004. Some Tunisian airports were transformed into Libyan zones of commerce. The Libyan flag was raised at Djerba Airport when political officials from Libya were received. Many Tunisian commentators and diplomats understood these transformations to have been the yielding of Tunisian territories to Libya.³⁶⁹ However, inter-state relations between the countries had beneficial effects for both regimes. Libyan finance enriched the Tunisian economy in the form of grants, loans and trade. Western states had implicitly consented to the increasing interdependence of Tunisian and Libya.³⁷⁰ The Libyan regime's adoption of the notion of constant revolution, in the form of Universal Theory³⁷¹, drove it to export this version of radical change to states inside and outside the Arab world.³⁷² Ben Ali was aware of the threat posed by Libya's ability to export these ideas and to polarise countries.³⁷³ Containment of the Libyan regime was thus the preferred strategy, using joint ventures of co-operation to achieve common interests.³⁷⁴ Tunisian relations with Libya needed to take

³⁶⁸ Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. Op cit

³⁶⁹ Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. Op cit

³⁷⁰ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit

³⁷¹ The Third Universal Theory was the form of rule described by Muammar Gaddafi in *The Green Book* in the mid-1970s. It is a pattern partly inspired by socialism and state capitalism, which dominate all the economic activities and cancel individual property. This theory claims that rule was in the hands of the people by means of Popular Congresses, which make decisions, and the Popular Committees, which implement them. In reality, what was implemented in Libya during Muammar Gaddafi's reign was the opposite of what he called for in his theory. He kept absolute power for himself and abolished the Constitution, which had been applied during the 1960s; thus, the country remained without a Constitution until he was overthrown in 2001.

³⁷² Author's interview with Mohamed Jenivan, *the Tunisian Diplomat*, (He served as a diplomat in many Tunisian embassies in Arab countries. (Tunis Tunisia, 2013).

³⁷³ Author's interview with Bashir Bin Salama, the *Secretary of a Former Tunisian Minister*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

³⁷⁴ Author's interview with Hisham Hajji, *the Libyan-Tunisian Affairs Specialist*. Op cit.

advantage of the opportunities for economic integration without falling into the trap of surrendering to the ideological agenda of Tripoli.

Conclusion

In the above discussion, I have examined Libyan-Tunisian relations through the analysis of primary sources collected mainly from interviews. I was able to identify seven key areas which have been illustrated in this chapter. The dominance of ideology between 1969 and 1987 appears to have been the case. However, this statement needs to be explained with reference to the key personalities in this period, and their wider context. The first area points to the fact that post-colonial states in the Maghreb were generally governed by authoritarian regimes. Before 1969, Libya was ruled by a monarchy, with absolute powers based on an informal web of tribal and clan alliances. Bourguiba was busy consolidating his power through the Neo-Constitutional Party. While some economic activity existed between Libya and Tunisia, the level of co-operation did not lead to efforts for integration. In Libya, the revolution brought a new regime to power which continued to use the tribes as the basis of its political strength, complemented by the vast oil wealth of the nation.

The second area identified in this chapter focuses on the impact of Bourguiba's education and politics on his policies. No clear political and economic ideology appears to have been espoused by the Francophile Bourguiba. His regime demonstrated the personal nature of power. The authoritarian structure of the regime enabled Bourguiba to pursue policies that were firstly based on liberalism, then on socialism, only to revert back to liberalism. Ahmed Ben Saleh was the Prime Minister, who seems to have influenced the Tunisian President to adopt socialism to carry out a rapid and much needed development of Tunisia during the 1960s. Pragmatic considerations, rather than ideological ones, led Bourguiba to formulate what was called 'Tunisian socialism' or 'Bourguibaism'. However, the failure of these socialist policies to achieve their intended objectives forced Bourguiba to imprison Ben Saleh in 1969.

The third area identifies the division between conservative and radical regimes in the Arab world. An ideological conflict took place during the Cold War. Bourguiba's Tunisia and Nasser's Egypt were locked in a rivalry over the future vision of the Arab world. While Bourguiba advocated a narrowly defined Tunisian nation-state, the Arabism of Nasser recognised no borders. Four attributes can be identified in Bourguiba's foreign policy, which

is generally based on his conservative beliefs: a personal 'realistic' view; the Tunisian nation-state; western models of state-building; and the avoidance of alliances or unions with Arab states.³⁷⁵ Gaddafi's regime in Tripoli adopted the Arabism of his Egyptian neighbour. Libya had formed unsuccessful unions with Egypt and Sudan between 1970-73. Libyan-Tunisian union would arrive a year later under the Islamic Arab Republic. Bourguiba had accepted Gaddafi's proposal to be the President of this union. The prospect of a pan-Maghreb union appealed to the leader of Tunisia. However, pressure from Bourguiba's own conservative allies in the Tunisian political elite, including the First Lady, and the Algerian President, Houari Boumediene's, forceful comments, led to its dissolution. Algeria refused and rejected the existence of the Islamic Arab Republic. The failure of the Djerba Agreements appears to have marked a period of deterioration between Bourguiba and Gaddafi in Libyan-Tunisian relations.

The fourth area pays attention to Bourguiba's controversial 1965 speech in Jericho, Palestine. He had outlined a proposal to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Palestinians were to accept the UN resolutions that partitioned Palestine. This would inevitably lead to the unimaginable prospect of recognising the state of Israel. No Arab statesmen would even suggest such an action in this period. In this context, Bourguiba's comments created a storm in Arab media. Public demonstrations across the Arab world showed how badly these comments were received. From the above analysis, Nasser and other Arab leaders appear to have been fully aware of Bourguiba's sentiments and of his plans to voice them, and they pledged their support for him. However, the events following the Jericho speech demonstrate the Tunisian leader's isolation among Arab heads of state and their populations.

The fifth area examines how Bourguiba's reaction to a failed coup d'état led him to view with suspicion the military leaders of the Arab world. A 1963 attempt to overthrow Bourguiba caused the Tunisian President to exert strict control over his army in order to keep it out of politics. A line was to be drawn between the activities of the military and participation in politics. Bourguiba had intended to play the role of elder statesman to the young Gaddafi after he had overthrown King Idris I. However, Gaddafi adopted the radical ideology of Arabism. This explains Bourguiba's further dislike of Gaddafi, when the latter chose to pursue the path of Nasser, a military officer who had attained power through a coup, in a bitter rivalry between Tunisia and Egypt in the Arab world.

³⁷⁵ Ezzedine Shukri, 'Political Change and Crisis of the Regime in Tunisia'. op cit, p.211.

The sixth area examines the crisis caused by the attack on Gafsa by Tunisian militants, who were allegedly supported by Libya. These militants were reputed to have been trained by Libya, seeking to lead a revolution against Bourguiba. Interestingly, the intelligence services of Libya and Algeria were said to have played a direct role in aiding this attempt to get rid of the Tunisian leader. The impact of the radical ideologies of Algeria and Libya was not restricted to political change within their own borders.

The seventh area identifies a new stage in Libyan-Tunisian relations after Ben Ali overthrew Bourguiba in 1987. Islam and Arab identity were to be part of the new foreign policy of Tunisia. Ben Ali appears to have been less suspicious of the radical politics of Libya. However, he remained wary of the revolutionary threat that Gaddafi posed to Tunisia. The new President of Tunisia chose to promote closer economic co-operation between the two countries in a new political environment. For Ben Ali, this policy was meant to allow Tunisia to benefit from Libya's wealth oil through economic exchange and to contain the radical politics of his Libyan counterpart. For Gaddafi, the economic opportunity with Tunisia enabled Libya some relief from the negative effects of the international sanctions imposed on it between 1992 and 2004. Common interests motivated by different factors appear to show a decline in the role of ideology in the inter-state relations of Tunisia and Libya.

CHAPTER SIX: A NEW POLITICAL ERA AND THE FORMALISATION OF LIBYAN-TUNISIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I identified the key personalities, events and processes in the inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya. Habib Bourguiba and Muammar Gaddafi dominated the politics and economies of the countries in ways which reflected the authoritarian powers they enjoyed. Politics was expressed in both formal and informal manifestations. The impact of ideology was felt in these two areas. Gaddafi's seeming lack of executive office was underpinned by an informal network of allies. Socialism allowed him to seize the natural resources and assets of private businesses. At the same time, the vast wealth generated by oil was tightly controlled by the new Libyan regime, which followed the Senoussi monarchy. Bourguiba's hostile rivalry with his neighbours came to an end in 1987. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the new President of Tunisia, adopted a more conciliatory approach in the Maghreb. Libya was a direct beneficiary of this new approach. Greater co-operation in the area of the economy was accompanied by better relations between the regimes in Tripoli and Tunis. Ben Ali and Gaddafi appear to have recognised benefits from a thaw in bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya.

I will examine in this chapter how decision-makers in Tunis and Tripoli took advantage of the opportunities resulting from the changes after 1987, which included a new regime in Tunisia, international sanctions on Libya, and other key factors. There are eight parts in this chapter, which focus on specific aspects of the changing bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya. I will begin by illustrating the differences between the two nations in their economic structures and policies, shaped by the long reigns of Bourguiba and Gaddafi. The remaining parts will discuss the following aspects: the stage of unorganised Libyan-Tunisian economic relations accompanied by the rise of the black market of 'the Tunisian Souk' in Libya; the application of the National Treatment Principle, aimed at the equal treatment of Libyan and Tunisian goods; the activities of the Libyan-Tunisian Economic Chamber, which was committed to promoting cross-border opportunities for businesses; the attempts at building up a common and suitable infrastructure for bilateral trading ties and the creation of

mega projects; the survival or presence of the private sector; the impact of the international embargo in the development of Libyan-Tunisian economic links; and, finally, the differences present in the banking and tourist sectors that are characterised by a certain degree of unpredictability, especially from the Libyan regime, in creating a stable environment for fruitful bilateral relations.

Differences in the Economic Structures and Policies of Tunisia and Libya

The personal nature of power, underpinned by authoritarian regimes, influenced the economic structures and policies in both states. Economic relations were weak and limited for reasons explained previously. Arab regimes were divided into 'conservative' and 'radical' camps during the Cold War era. Habib Bourguiba had a personal and ideological dislike of the politics of Gaddafi's Libya and of Nasser's Egypt. The Libyan revolutionary leader was determined to reshape the borders and states in the Arab world into a single Arab state. Union after union had failed in this attempt. However, Gaddafi's enthusiasm for Arab unity lasted for more than twenty years. Different policies in the domestic affairs of Tunisia and Libya appear to have played a part in the low level of trade between them. A lack of joint initiatives in both the public and private sectors is clearly noticeable. Examination of the main characteristics of the economy of Libya and Tunisia will enable me to identify their past differences in this sphere. Political personalities and regimes, and Libyan-Tunisian relations were, and continue to be, interdependent factors.

Tunisia's limited resources and occasional economic crises encouraged Bourguiba and Ben Ali to implement an agenda that was based on its strengths. Liberal policies in the early 1970s followed the failure of socialism that was based on a plan of rapid modernisation. Foreign companies were invited to import much needed technology into the country. The generation of a high number of jobs for Tunisians was understood by al-Habib al-Homami to have been the key goal in this policy. Indeed, Tunisia is home to the largest number of skilled workers in the Maghreb.³⁷⁶ Previously, the economy was largely based on local industries involving crafts and agriculture. Changes to the very economic structure of the Tunisian economy would require a radical approach. Modernisation based on socialism, under the influence of Ahmed Ben Saleh, proved unable to achieve the results needed for Bourguiba

³⁷⁶ Author's interview with al-Habib al-Homami, *the Director of the Tunisia Commercial Attaché in Libya*. (Benghazi, Libya., 2013).

and his regime. The drive to industrialise became a top priority. The following excerpt from Murad al-Hattab and Ali al-Thawadi confirms this position,

This is consistent with what the economic expert, Murad al-Hattab, says. According to him, Tunisia focused its industrial policies on light manufacturing during this period, for two main reasons:³⁷⁷ firstly, it does not possess enough financial resources and high technological expertise to invest in heavy industries. Secondly, its main objective at that stage was to confront the high and increasing unemployment rates among Tunisians. As confirmed by Ali al-Thawadi Tunisia mainly aimed to establish industry that used minimal cost and advanced scientific technological expertise, but which was also capable of employing the largest possible number of workers. Indeed, since Prime Minister Hedi Nouira, it has started moving in this direction. It has established 3000 factories for textiles, which offered over 400,000 jobs, in addition to 800 other factories for the food industry, whose products have been exported to many countries.³⁷⁸

The government's agenda concentrated on light manufacturing instead of the capital-intensive heavy industries. A lack of the finance to push forward the modernisation goals of the Tunisian regime led to greater efforts to adopt policy with the lowest costs and the highest benefits. Mass job creation was the intended objective, as I mentioned earlier. A few thousand factories providing hundreds of thousands of jobs could now absorb the large number of Tunisians who were out of work. The segment of the population of working age in 1970 was estimated at 2.6 million out of 5.2 million.³⁷⁹ This posed potential economic and political sources of tension for Bourguiba's regime in the form of a politically restless organised labour movement. Economic reforms were needed to achieve modernisation and to bring political stability to a regime facing internal and external threats to its stability.

In neighbouring Libya, the economy has relied heavily on oil exports. The economic policies adopted by Gaddafi were very different from those pursued in Tunisia. Local resources and conditions influenced the process of modernisation. Several projects involving heavy industry

³⁷⁷ Author's interview with Murad al-Hattab, *the Tunisian economics expert*, (Tunis, Tunisia 2013)

³⁷⁸ Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the Former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and the economics expert*. Op cit.

³⁷⁹ D.B. Johnson, *Population of Tunisia: Estimates and Projections: 1967-2000* (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1971).p1

and petroleum processing were launched. The choice of these two areas of industrial modernisation was due both to the fact that Libya was generating a large amount of revenue from oil³⁸⁰, and its relationship to Gaddafi's regional ambitions. The extreme ideology espoused by Gaddafi faced potential challenges which needed to be confronted.³⁸¹ Heavy industries, such as petrochemicals and iron production, were to be developed.

Libyan objectives were motivated by various goals. The achievement of self-sufficiency in the products of these sectors and the export of any surplus to the rest of the Maghreb was an aim.³⁸² Additionally, the creation of a military industry was pursued by the Gaddafi regime, as demonstrated by Libyan policies and programmes.³⁸³ Colleges and institutes were to be established to generate the much needed personnel with the military production expertise to undertake the plans, and to oversee and implement this industry. Further, thousands of students were sent to eastern European countries during the 1970s and 1980s to study these subjects.³⁸⁴

According to Tariq Ben Kabir, the different economic policies dominating Libya and Tunisia had a negative impact on the development of their economic relations during the 1970s and 1980s.³⁸⁵ A similar view is suggested by Ali al-Thawadi concerning the limited nature of commercial ties, which nonetheless existed between the two nations. Tunisia was on the list of retail clothes exporting-nations to Libya in 1985. The Libyan government's General Company for Markets imported these goods and enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the commercial activities within the country.³⁸⁶ Although the public sector in Libya maintained limited economic transactions, the Tunisian private sector tried to stimulate activity in this area. However, the bitter political climate between the countries frustrated the efforts to raise the level of trade between them.³⁸⁷ One example of the link between the personal hostility of the leaders of Tunisia and Libya can be found in the 1985 Tripoli International Fair.³⁸⁸ Over

³⁸⁰ Author's interview with Mahmoud al-Fatissi, *the former Minister of Industry in Libya*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Author's interview with al-Bashir al-Ajili, *the Libyan economics expert*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

³⁸³ Jadallah Azzouzi Al-Talhi, 'Press Release by the Former Libyan Prime Minister', *Al-Fajr newspaper*, 1985.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Author's interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and economics expert*. Op cit.

³⁸⁸ The Tripoli International Fair is one of the oldest exhibitions in Africa and the Arab World. Its first season was during the Italian occupation in 1927. It joined the Union of International Fairs in 1929 and Italian industrial and agricultural products were exhibited during that time. It opened constantly for 13 years until 1939,

130 Tunisian companies showcased their products, mainly clothes and shoes, at the fair. Strict security procedures were imposed on the delegation from Tunisia. The President of the Tunisian Chamber of Commerce noted that:

When I was on my way to inaugurate the aforementioned exhibition, Libyan authorities detained me at the airport. As a pretext, their justification was that I was suspected of working for Tunisian Intelligence, so that I was summonsed for investigation on the matter, which lasted for 3 days before I was allowed to enter Libya.³⁸⁹

Deliberate targeting of the head of a trade visit can be located in the broader context of the sour relations between Bourguiba and Gaddafi in the preceding years. Personal rivalry had been translated into politics and the economy. The humiliation of a senior official, a representative of businesses in Tunisia, was a message that they were unwelcome in neighbouring Libya. Further, public companies representing the Libyan government boycotted the products of the delegation.³⁹⁰ Melad al-Jalady, the then head of the General Company for Libyan Markets, reported that Libyan delegates, officials and companies had neither commercial ties with Tunisian joint companies, nor had they paid visits to the Gallery hosting the companies from Tunisia. Libyan authorities gave these orders with the aim of making the Tunisian exhibition a failure.³⁹¹ The Gaddafi regime exercised a tight grip on Libya's economy, thereby closing down potential channels for greater co-operation. No independent private sector, examined in a previous chapter, existed within Libya which could challenge the formal or informal mechanisms of power. Gaddafi's socialist system, based on the nationalisation of Libya's economy, had the effect of shifting formerly private enterprises into the hands of his family and allies.

In the early 1980s, the call for joint projects of economic integration was made during Gaddafi's visit to Tunisia. Politics took Gaddafi to Tunisia, but an agreement for economic

and the outbreak of World War II. The Fair resumed its activity with a 14th season in 1962. It is supervised by the General Authority for Exhibitions in Libya. The Tripoli International Fair opens in the first half of April every year. A number of Libyan and international companies from many specialties participate in it. Its latest season was held in 2013, when over 1600 participants from all over the world came.

³⁸⁹ Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the Former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economics Chamber and the economics expert*. Op cit.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Author's interview with Melad al-Jalady, *the Director of the Western Branch of the General Company for Libyan Markets*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

integration was signed. I will mention a few of the reason leading to the trip in order to show the complex and personal nature of bilateral relations between Libya and Tunisia. It was a chance to reconcile damaged relations between the Libyan and Tunisian leaders after the Gafsa incident, with Libya being accused by Bourguiba of having supported armed rebellion against him. Gaddafi wanted to urge his counterpart in Tunis not to allow the Libyan opposition to use Tunisian territory to undermine him. Libya wanted to keep Tunisia neutral after the Gulf of Sidra dispute, which saw two of its fighter jets shot down. In light of Libyan intentions behind the trip, Bourguiba himself took the visit to be an opportunity to contain Libya's radical ideological policies in the region.

The agreement, signed in 1982, was seen to be an important step towards the improvement of the regimes' bilateral relations. Importantly, the agreement launched the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee and stipulated its structure and functions.³⁹² However, the 1980s would continue to be a period of bitter relations, which witnessed a very low point between Tunisia and Libya, with diplomatic ties being broken by the former. Diplomatic ties were only restored after Bourguiba was ousted by his Prime Minister in 1987, which led to a drastic change in the inter-state relations and life was breathed into the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.

Unorganised Libyan-Tunisian Economic Relations

Weak ties had dominated from the 1970s until the middle of the 1980s. A complete break in trade took place between 1985 and 1987. The end of Bourguiba's reign ushered in a change in the relations between Tunisia and Libya after 1987, with a subsequent boost to their economies. Ben Ali had re-established relations and opened Tunisia's borders with Libya. To reciprocate in the new phase of Libyan-Tunisian relations, Muammar Gaddafi drove a tractor and destroyed a Libyan border crossing barrier in April, 1988, in a public show of integration. Subsequently, people and goods from Tunisia were allowed to enter Libya without passports or the imposition of custom duties, respectively.³⁹³ Such a public show of this new policy was also a pragmatic demonstration of the personal nature of power. It would appear that

³⁹² Libya and Tunisia Governments, 'Agreement on Economic Integration ', in The Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ed.), Governmental Agreement.(Tripoli, Libya: 1982).

³⁹³ Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and the economics expert*. Op cit.

Gaddafi's wish, based on his longstanding belief in Arabism, for the removal of borders among Arab states was being fulfilled. Arab unity demanded the erasure of colonial era boundaries separating a single Arab people.

In the previous chapter, I discussed Gaddafi's failed attempts at political union with other Arab states, including the doomed Islamic Arab Republic in 1974. Removal of the obstacles to the free movement of people and goods was also a major element in the revolutionary ideas of the Libyan regime in this period. Interestingly, the cross-border activity between Tunisia and Libya was largely informal, even without the official stamp of Arab unity. Instead, it can be perceived to have been a radical turnaround from previous cold ties to warm relations. The formalisation of the free movement of goods and people, caused by Gaddafi's politically symbolic breaking of the border, would arrive later and will be discussed further in this chapter.

A revival began in Libyan-Tunisian economic relations. However, Salah-eddin al-Jamali points out that these relations were neither organized nor subject to clear customs procedures.³⁹⁴ No precise regulation, such as monitoring or auditing these activities, could occur. A black market had flourished in the hands of cross-border smugglers.³⁹⁵ Markets labelled as 'the Tunisian Souk' emerged in the border cities of Libya. Libya's government imposed a policy of economic austerity creating a shortage of goods and products, thereby unintentionally aiding the growth of the black market in the mid-1980s.³⁹⁶ Individuals and private businesses had filled the economic vacuum. Increasing demand for Tunisian products in Libya had stimulated the expansion of such unorganised activities. No border control officials existed to monitor the flow of goods between Libya and Tunisia. This situation appears to reflect a deliberate move on the part of the Libyan regime.

A new leadership in Tunis created the opportunity for Gaddafi to reverse Libya's hostile policy towards the fellow Maghrebi country. Instead, greater economic co-operation, motivated by pragmatic considerations, was being introduced in the region. There were clear benefits to be gained from such a change in relations. However, there were also unanticipated

³⁹⁴ Author's interview with Salah-eddin al-Jamali *the former Tunisian Ambassador to Libya*. Op cit.

³⁹⁵ Author's interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the Former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

³⁹⁶ Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and economics expert*. Op cit.

consequences.³⁹⁷ Tunisian products of poor quality were brought into the Libyan economy. According to Ali al-Thawadi, the opening of the borders had a negative impact on the reputation of goods manufactured in Tunisia. As a result, the Chamber of Trade and Commerce and the Economic Ministry, and the customs service in Tunisia, intervened in an attempt to rehabilitate the reputation of Tunisian-made goods and Tunisian trade in general, and to protect long-term trading interests.³⁹⁸

Effectiveness of the National Treatment Principle

Better organisation of Libyan-Tunisian relations is believed to have emerged due to a number of joint agreements that were signed in the early 1990s.³⁹⁹ The regimes in both nations saw an advantage in the formalisation of the informal activities that were seemingly beyond their control. Centralisation aimed to introduce new regulations and procedures for cross-border trade. Improvement in the relations between Tunisia and Libya, according to the government official in charge of Libyan-Tunisian economic co-operation, was mainly a result of the implementation of the 'National Treatment Principle'.⁴⁰⁰ The Free-Trade Area agreement, signed in 2001, that came into force in the following year, only stipulated the free movement of goods, without the imposition of any customs duties. However, the official recognition of the free movement of people was not made. Instead, Libyan and Tunisian products were to be exempted from taxes and customs duties when crossing the border, according to this principle.⁴⁰¹ Foreign and domestic goods were to receive identical treatment. In the first decade of the 21st century, economic ties between Tunisia and Libya developed considerably. The value of trade for Tunisia had increased from 1.455 billion Tunisian Dinars (TND) in 2008 to 1.876 billion (TND) in 2009. Libya's exports to Tunisia were about 755 million TND of this total. Further, Tunisia's export value was 1.112 billion TND and reached 2.504 billion TND in 2010.⁴⁰² While Tunisian exports contained a diversity of products, such as vegetable oil, milk and dairy products, tomato paste, tissue papers, construction materials, spare parts,

³⁹⁷M Gaddafi, 'Speech, on the Event of Destroying the Libyan Border Crossing Barrier of Ras Jdair.' *The Libyan National Record*, (Volume 19: Publications of the Green Book Studies, 1988).

³⁹⁸Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and economics expert*. Op cit.

³⁹⁹Author's interview with Mahmoud al-Fatissi, *the Former Minister of Industry in Libya*. Op cit.

⁴⁰⁰Author's interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial Co-operation Portfolio, under the General Administration of Economic and Commercial Co-operation at the Tunisian Ministry of Commerce*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2012).

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰²Tunisian Ministry of the Economy, 'A Report on the value of trade exchanges between Tunisia and Libya'. Official report, the General Administration of Economic and Commercial Co-operation (ed), (Tunisia 2011)

fertilisers, vegetables and packaging materials, exported by 1200 Tunisian companies,⁴⁰³ Libyan exports were limited to petroleum-based products, sulphur, iron and steel.⁴⁰⁴

Bilateral relations were intended to achieve certain goals. Government officials involved in this process, who were interviewed, articulated two objectives behind the free exchange of goods taking place between Tunisia and Libya. Short-term development of trade was the first important step towards better economic relations. As Libya became Tunisia's main Arab economic partner and occupied fifth position, following Germany, Italy, France and Spain, Tunisia also became its neighbour's fifth-ranked trading nation.⁴⁰⁵ Interdependence based on joint Libyan-Tunisian companies located on either side of the border, with export markets in the region and across the world, was a long-term aim.⁴⁰⁶ In recent years, a gradual realisation of this idea has led to the establishment of oil-based product factories in Libya and food factories in Tunisia that are owned by businessmen of both nationalities. These factors are a manifestation of the trend towards joint Libyan-Tunisian collaboration involving a large role for private enterprise.⁴⁰⁷ The pragmatic interest in lowering the barriers for mutual economic growth appears to be driving this co-operation across various levels of the societies of Tunisia and Libya. Aggressive ideological claims for Arab unity do not characterise these relations. Instead, the policy of Ben Ali, which aimed to direct Libya's vast oil wealth into his country's economy, was complemented by Gaddafi's need for a nearby market for imports and exports. International sanctions, which I will examine later in this chapter, forced the Libyan regime to foster closer economic and political links in the Maghreb.

A contrary position was expressed by another group of officials who have a conservative view on the free trade agreements. Two senior figures from Libya believed these agreements were not to the advantage of their nation. There was thus an urgent need for revision, singling out the consequences of the National Treatment Principle.⁴⁰⁸ Two reasons were cited. The first revolved around the fact that a number of Tunisian products competed against their local counterparts. This was a violation of the policy of protection being given to Libyan goods. As

⁴⁰³ Author's interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit

⁴⁰⁴ Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *Head of the Department of International Co-operation, in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy* Op cit

⁴⁰⁵ Author's interview with Saeeda Hashisha, *The General Director of the Department of Economic Co-operation and Trade, Ministry of the Economy and Trade of Tunisia*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

⁴⁰⁶ Author's interview with Tariq Bin Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *Head of the Department of International Co-operation, in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy*. Op cit.

a result, these goods would eventually disappear, due to the price and quality of Tunisian products.⁴⁰⁹ Further, the list of banned or restricted imports,⁴¹⁰ intended to protect local products, did not concern Tunisian imports, as the latter were granted exemptions in regard to their export into Libya.⁴¹¹

Formal exemptions through the General Secretary of the General People's Committees Decision No. 242 were issued in April, 2007, which removed customs service charges, normally 10% of an imported product's invoice. Up to 28 products from Tunisia were exempted.⁴¹² Another decision in 2007 determined an 18% upper limit for consumption taxes on Tunisian products, while imports from other countries reached 100%. The privileges enjoyed thus allowed Tunisian products to acquire a competitive edge in the Libyan economy.⁴¹³ The second reason directly relates to the belief that Libya drew virtually no benefits from the free trade agreement. Libyan exports were mainly oil-based products from government-owned industries, which did not require exemption from customs duties, since they were regulated by the global market. 90% of Libya's exports to Tunisia were thus these oil-based products. Whereas Libya did not face any difficulties in finding export markets for these products, products from Tunisia suffered from this type of predicament.⁴¹⁴

A former Director of the Department of International Co-operation in the Libyan Economic Ministry perceived the implementation of the National Treatment Principle to be mainly in Tunisia's favour. A positive trade balance existed for Tunisia. Further, the economic policy of the Tunisian government sought to benefit from exemptions from import taxes and customs

⁴⁰⁹Author's interview with Mohamed al-Reaid, *the Former President of the Libyan Side of the Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber of Economics*, (Misrata, Libya, 2013).

⁴¹⁰ The list of goods whose importation was restricted by came from both private and public companies and included 17 products, the most important of which are: fresh fruit and vegetables, eggs and fowls, frozen fish, mineral and gaseous water, olive oil and textbooks. It should be noted that this list was not fixed; it underwent regular modulations and modifications, for instance, the list adopted in 2005 differed from that adopted in 2007.

⁴¹¹Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *Head of the Department of International Co-operation, in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy*. Op cit

⁴¹²The General Secretary of the General People's Committee 's (the Libyan Prime Minister), Resolution 242 Concerning the elimination of customs duties on Tunisian commodities. Governmental Resolution, (Libya Tripoli, 2007).

⁴¹³ The General Secretary of the General People's Committee (the Libyan Prime Minister), Resolution 315, Concerning the determination of the threshold of consumption taxes on Tunisian products, is an unpublished document.(Tripoli , 2007)

⁴¹⁴Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *Head of the Department of International Co-operation, in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy* Op cit

duties in order to maintain a trade balance that was slanted in its favour.⁴¹⁵ Tunisian imports experienced a fall from 754.2 million TND in 2009 to 406.3 million TND in 2010. Petroleum imports from Libya were reduced, with Tunisia diversifying its oil sources from other countries.⁴¹⁶ A fear was entertained by Tunisia that there could be an interruption of much needed oil supplies, similar to the one later experienced during the Libyan revolution, when petroleum production effectively came to an abrupt end.⁴¹⁷ A different view was expressed by a very senior government official involved in international co-operation that Tunisia's policy was directed at maintaining an advantage in the Libyan-Tunisian trade balance after Libya had rejected a suggestion of setting a preferential oil price for it. Libyan unwillingness to agree to this suggestion was that oil prices were regulated by the world market.⁴¹⁸ Limits to the relations between Libya and Tunisia seem to have been present. Economic co-operation was largely dependent on the perceived interests of the nation and the political elite with both usually being interchangeable.

The Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber

The formalisation of trading ties between Tunisia and Libya can be seen in the formation of the Libyan-Tunisian Economic Chamber.⁴¹⁹ This organisation sought to promote bilateral relations between the two Maghrebi countries through the expansion of economic opportunities for their companies. Co-ordination of activities in the present will guarantee the establishment of a complementary relationship paving the way for future integration.⁴²⁰ The former Libyan President of the Chamber recounts its successes thus far in several areas.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁵ Author's interview, 'anonymous', *the former Director of the Administration of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation at the Libyan Ministry of the Economy*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2012).

⁴¹⁶ Tunisia, Tunisian National Institute of Statistics, *Trade by Country 2009-13*, http://www.ins.nat.tn/ar/donnee_economiques3.php?Code_indicateur=1804020, accessed in 26/01/2014.

⁴¹⁷ Author's interview with Saeeda Hashisha, *The General Director of the Department of Economic Co-operation and Trade, Ministry of the Economy and Trade of Tunisia*. Op cit.

⁴¹⁸ Author's interview with Ali Wahida, *Head of the Department of International Co-operation, in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy*. Op cit.

⁴¹⁹ The Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber is an organisation that represents the private sector and defends its interests in different issues that relate to commercial and economic relations between Tunisia and Libya. It has two Presidents, a Tunisian and a Libyan, and is managed by an administrative council, which is half Tunisian and half Libyan. Its headquarters is in Tunis City, while its department is in Tripoli. The joint chamber forms part of the unions of businessmen of both countries and organises the commercial activity. Members of the board of directors are selected with the Tunisian half appointed by the Tunisian Union of Industry, Commerce and Handicrafts, the only organisation that represents Tunisian businessmen, and the Libyan half is appointed by the Libyan General Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the only organisation that represents Libyan businessmen.

⁴²⁰ The Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber Of Economics, Article 2 of the Basic Law of the Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber Of Economics (1989). Op cit.

⁴²¹ Author's Interview with Mohamed al-Reaid, *the former President of the Libyan Side of the Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber of Economics*. op cit.

The issuing of certificates of origin⁴²² falls within its remit. Certificates created by the Tunisian Union of Industry and Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, for products from Tunisia and Libya, respectively, are subject to official approval through this mechanism. These certificates were to be ratified by the Libyan-Tunisian Economic Chamber. The Protocol on the Rules of Origin⁴²³ stipulated the power of the national business chamber to approve these certificates, with a minimum integration rate of 40%.⁴²⁴ Local production processes and elements were thus required to contribute almost half to the finished products in order to be considered 'national' in origin and to qualify for an exemption.

Pressure from the private sector and the national organisations which represent them preceded the Tunisian and Libyan authorities' recognition of the need to develop bilateral relations.⁴²⁵ A former President noted that the chamber was awarded perpetual membership in the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee due to its positive impact in developing co-operation between these two states. It has been able to contribute to the decision-making processes on important issues.⁴²⁶ Mutual recognition of a certificate of conformity to specifications, issued by either of the trading nations, suggested by the Chamber, became official policy.⁴²⁷ Formal acceptance of this rule was agreed in 2001.⁴²⁸ Imported products would no longer be subject to further examination after crossing the border. Exports and imports of goods between Tunisia and Libya accelerated as a result.

⁴²² This is a certificate which proves that goods or products that are being exported from one of the two countries to the other, are either Tunisian or Libyan.

⁴²³ An agreement signed by the two countries which states that it considers any products with no less than 40 percent of its production contributed by the local producers to be a national product. The country has the right to export it and it is exempt from customs duties. It also assigned the right to the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in each country to issue the certificate proving its source, which is called the Certificate of Origin.

⁴²⁴ Author's Interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial Co-operation Portfolio*. Op cit.

⁴²⁵ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ A certificate which shows that the product exported does not contravene the technical specifications adopted. The two countries started using this measure as a result of a series of studies and negotiations between committees and the specialised teams in the two countries. It studied the conditions and technical specifications made by both countries, and also studied the abilities of the institutions assigned to issue the Certificates of Conformity. All these procedures culminated in the signing of The Agreement of Mutual Recognition of Conformity Certificates in 2006.

⁴²⁸ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit.

More extensive formalisation of the new stage of economic co-operation was underway. Accreditation of organisations in the area of issuing certificates of conformity led to Libyan recognition of this authority, based on the stated specifications for products by Tunisian institutions.⁴²⁹ These institutions were the National Institute for Standardisation and Industrial Property, the Tunisian Trade Office and the Ministry of Agriculture. Tunisia also awarded this power to issue certificates to the Libyan National Centre for Standardisation and Metrology, which was tasked with regulating all types of Libyan goods exported to Tunisia.⁴³⁰ A wide variety of products, particularly in the case of Tunisian agencies, were subjected to official intervention. Previously informal economic flows between Tunisia and Libya were transformed into formally defined trading transactions under the watchful eye of government officials or state-related organisations.

Conflict mediation also fell within the sphere of the activities of the Chamber. Disputes between businessmen from Tunisia and Libya were to be managed through the resources of this joint organisation. Insurance and direct assistance in formulating resolutions are two examples of the available measures to deal with conflicts.⁴³¹ Mohamed al-Reaid, Libyan President of the Chamber, supports this idea. Confidence in a secure environment in which to conduct business was created by the Chamber's existence and its activities. Several Libyan-Tunisian companies were subsequently founded, with over 40 joint investment projects in the Libyan private sector.⁴³²

Another explanation is offered by the former Libyan Chairman of the General Secretariat in the High Executive Committee for the emergence of Libyan-Tunisian companies. Despite the Chamber's achievements in creating a common ground for commercial interests, new laws in Libya that rolled back the ban against the private ownership of companies in the mid-1990s were the main factor.⁴³³ Libya's law for foreign investment sent a message of reassurance to businessmen in Tunisia encouraging them to invest in the nearby country. Previous laws

⁴²⁹ Author's Interview with Ali Wahida, *Head of the Department of International Co-operation, in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Trade Economy*. Op cit

⁴³⁰ Author's Interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial Co-operation portfolio*. Op cit

⁴³¹ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit

⁴³² Author's Interview with Mohamed al-Reaid, *the former President of the Libyan Side of of the Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber of Economics*. op cit.

⁴³³ Author's interview with Abdullah al-Harrari, *the former Head of the Libyan side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian joint Higher Committee*. Op cit.

restricting the scope and nature of commercial transactions had discouraged Tunisian businesses.⁴³⁴

In a report by the Chamber, radical changes to Libya's legal system are acknowledged to have stimulated Libyan-Tunisian economic relations:

The commencement and persistence of economic reforms, and the gradual orientation towards a market economy through laws that Libya passed, led to the emergence of a Libyan effective private sector. The Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber therefore sought to make known those laws, especially the ones concerning foreign investment.⁴³⁵

The Chamber appears to be committed to propagating the awareness that a new legal environment now existed. Foreign direct investment by Tunisia in Libya was a primary objective in the overall attempt to create and strengthen the private sector. A market economy protected by the law demonstrates a substantial transformation in the thinking of the Gaddafi regime towards the end of the 20th century. Socialism and Arabism no longer determined the project of political or economic integration. Instead, the economic trade between Tunisia and Libya was to be based on an opening up of both their economies through an alliance between the regime, composed of mainly family members, and an emerging private sector connected to international flows of capital.

Active encouragement of joint projects was a major aspect of the Chamber's responsibilities. It was charged with fostering closer links between Tunisian and Libyan businesses. The creation of a shared interest in such a formal setting aimed to bring together previously weak or informal economic ties. An official in the Chamber stated that the collaboration of the Chambers of Commerce in both countries, together with other social organisations, was the right approach to pursue joint interests. Consideration of these interests by those directly involved in decision-making processes could avert a repeat of the expulsion of 30,000 Tunisian workers from Libya in 1985.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴Ibid.

⁴³⁵The Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber Of Economics (ed), 'A Report on Libyan Investment Law',. Report. (Tunisia, 2006).

⁴³⁶Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*.Op cit.

The above mentioned achievements of the Chamber have not provoked praise in some quarters. They are not believed to have met the expectations of the private sector as represented by the Chamber. No genuine integration of the interests of Tunisian and Libyan businesses took place. Instead, the activities of the Chamber have only led to an increase in the rate of trade between them.⁴³⁷ An official in charge of economic co-operation in Tunisia's embassy in Libya stated that:

The shared interests required to move relationships at the level of the private sector from a matter of mere commercial exchanges to a real strategic partnership which guarantees entry to new markets, such as the African ones, after reaching self-sufficiency for both the Tunisian and Libyan Co-operation markets. The Joint Chamber did not propose to achieve this particular goal.⁴³⁸

He identified an obvious weakness in the Chamber's explicit objectives. A higher level of co-ordination, in the form of a genuine partnership, was needed between the private sectors of Tunisian and Libya. Co-operation leading to the maximising of economic opportunities in Libyan-Tunisian relations should then focus on opening up new markets. The official cited the economies in Africa as an example of the potential for the outward expansion of a deepening integration between Tunisia and Libya. However, the Chamber did not adopt a policy of joint commercial ties focusing on the creation of new overseas markets. A perception of short sightedness appears to have been an issue for the Chamber in its exclusive emphasis on the domestic economies of the two Maghrebi countries.

The Chamber was merely one organisation of many which were charged with the responsibility to achieve an interdependence of interests. According to the Director of the Tunisian Department of Economic and Commercial Co-operation, interdependence could only occur if states and their agencies took action to create the conditions needed for it.⁴³⁹ Amendment and facilitation of existing procedures, which impeded this goal, could work towards such a mutually beneficial situation. Liberalisation of industry, commerce and

⁴³⁷ Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

⁴³⁸ Author's interview with Foad al-Karim, *in charge of the Economic Co-operation at the Tunisian Embassy in Libya*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

⁴³⁹ Author's Interview with Saeeda Hashisha, *The General Director of the Department of Economic Co-operation and Trade, Ministry of the Economy and Trade of Tunisia*. Op cit.

agricultural activities was to be accompanied by an economic reform of services⁴⁴⁰ in Libya and Tunisia.⁴⁴¹ Further obstacles existed to the freedom of business enterprises. The Tunisian Commercial Attaché in Libya noted the adoption of laws allowing only nationals to run businesses and services in the country. Such a position was a clear infringement of the Four Freedoms Agreement, in the areas of employment, ownership, residence and movement, which was intended to be the highest level of economic liberalisation to take place between Tunisia and Libya. Greater efforts should have been focused on the actual implementation of the clauses of the agreement.⁴⁴² Greater trading ties would be created through allowing citizens of both countries to work, conduct business, live and travel without any restrictions.

Seminars, exhibitions and meetings have been organised by the Chamber for investors from both countries in order to increase awareness of the investment possibilities in the private sector. However, the results of these actions were limited, with no noticeable impact on the volume of investments, which were limited to allowing commercial activities to be carried out by Tunisian and Libyan institutions.⁴⁴³

Twinning agreements between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, signed by seven out of eight Tunisian Chambers with their Libyan counterparts, achieved nothing. A former Director of the Libyan Chamber of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce observed,

The twinning agreement, which was signed between most of the Tunisian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in a number of Tunisian cities, and their Libyan counterparts, did not culminate in real partnership between them. This

⁴⁴⁰ The liberalisation of services refers to the rights of citizens of both countries, and private as well as public companies, to access the services sector in the other country, through using the same laws that are applied to the citizens of that country. A number of former ministers, ambassadors and officials in charge of the files relating to Libyan-Tunisian relations, who were interviewed, consider this a necessary step towards establishing a real partnership between the two countries. Nonetheless, this requires an alteration in current laws. The latter do not permit Tunisian or Libyan citizens to engage in activities that have to do with the services sector in the other country. For example, a Libyan citizen cannot start a small business or own a taxi in Tunisia. On the other hand, a Tunisian citizen cannot engage in any activities relating to the services sector in Libya.

⁴⁴¹ Author's Interview with Saeeda Hashisha, *The General Director of the Department of Economic Co-operation and Trade, Ministry of the Economy and Trade of Tunisia*. Op cit

⁴⁴² Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.=

⁴⁴³ Author's Interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial.-Operation Portfolio*. Op cit.

accounts for not organising forums and exhibitions on a regular basis. These co-operation agreements have remained in the form of slogans and political bids.⁴⁴⁴

Extensive efforts to formalise economic relations between national organisations in Tunisia and Libya indicate their importance. However, there was an absence of results in the creation of substantial partnerships between Tunisian and Libyan businesses. Rhetoric about co-operation was not followed by action. Participation of these individual chambers and their representative institutions in trade fairs was limited.⁴⁴⁵ An official at the Tunisian Ministry of Commerce agreed with this assessment. The visible absence of the Chambers was compounded by the low number of fairs organised by government agencies. No real efforts were made to hold or support joint Libyan-Tunisian trade fairs. Broader attention, beyond international fairs hosted in Libya and Tunisia, should include initiatives exclusively for Tunisian and Libyan companies.⁴⁴⁶ The Tripoli International Fair is an example of exclusive Tunisian participation. However, there were no fairs for companies held in Tunisia or Libya. An opportunity existed for the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber to run and supervise greatly needed trade fairs supported by the Tunisian and Libyan governments. It seems that attempts at formalisation were obstructed to some extent by the authoritarian nature of the regimes in the Maghreb. Power was exercised through informal ties of family or business acquaintances, where personal views could decisively shape the direction of inter-state policies. A lack of interest or knowledge on the part of Ben Ali or Gaddafi in the actual details of Libyan-Tunisian relations may thus explain why there was a lack of joint action based on trade fairs, or the opening up of new markets in Africa.

Infrastructure and Joint Strategic Mega-Projects

Domestic changes are closely linked to the emergence of strong inter-state ties in the economy. The public sector in Libya and Tunisia aims to realise two key goals. Firstly, the creation of a durable infrastructure would be able to accommodate a high density of trade. Secondly, strategic projects of mutual co-operation, to be carried out primarily by the public sector, with the required expertise and large capital expenditure. Consequently, a suitable climate for investment would be created for the development of economic co-operation. A

⁴⁴⁴Author's interview with Shaaban al-Montasir, *the Former Director of the Libyan Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

⁴⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶Author's Interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial Co-operation Portfolio*. Op cit.

change in Tunisia's ruling elite in 1987 also brought a new political desire for economic integration. A number of agreements were signed for the implementation of joint projects aiming to develop national infrastructures and projects of integration.⁴⁴⁷ In the latter area, Tunisia and Libya co-operated on the Sfax-Tripoli Highway, the Electricity Linkage Project, the Unified Customs Port Project and the Skhira Petroleum Refinery Project.

These projects, according to the former Commercial Attaché at the Tunisian Embassy in Libya, were motivated by the desire to develop infrastructures appropriate for the remarkable development in trade exchange between Libya and Tunisia. However, the situation appears completely at odds with this desire, as demonstrated by the lack of railways for the efficient and speedy transport of passengers and goods, and the complete lack of maritime links between the ports of both countries. The overland route used for the transportation of most of the goods in the cross-border trade, as well as for passengers, is not fit for the existing volume of traffic and has not been renewed since the 1970s.⁴⁴⁸

Projects of integration which have been agreed in meetings between Libyan-Tunisian committees, complemented by scientific studies, have suffered from complications surrounding their implementation. Various obstacles have emerged in this push towards deepening economic co-operation. The electricity linkage project experienced technical complications in the process of its implementation. An integrated electricity grid between Tunisia and Libya was not eventually achieved. No technical conditions existed between the Tunisian and Libyan networks. Co-operation was thus limited to exchanging some of the power in areas close to the border.⁴⁴⁹

Adequate amounts of money were not allocated from the general budgets of both countries to carry out some of the projects. Bilateral relations were highlighted as being the main reason why the neighbouring governments, especially Libya, did not commit to the schedules set for accomplishing mega-projects.⁴⁵⁰ The Sfax-Tripoli Highway is one such example, where Tunisia completed over 60% of its share and Libyan companies failed to complete more than

⁴⁴⁷ Author's Interview with Abdullah al-Harrari, *the former Head of the Libyan side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee*. Op cit

⁴⁴⁸ Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit

⁴⁴⁹ Author's interview with Anwar Saleh al-Dawadi, *the Director of Employment and Censorship Studies, General Control Administration of the Libyan Ministry of Electricity*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2012).

⁴⁵⁰ Author's Interview with Mahmoud al-Fatissi, *the former Minister of Industry in Libya*. Op cit

10% of theirs, due to the failure to receive payment.⁴⁵¹ A more optimistic position was outlined by Karim al-Wlaherani as, while acknowledging the slow rate of completion of these projects, other projects were finished on time. The Omar al-Mukhtar Residential City was built by Libya and Tunisia, with houses distributed to Tunisian beneficiaries.⁴⁵² Political would appear to be a determining factor in the signing of agreements and the completion of projects for integration. However, the weak state of the national infrastructure in Libya, compared to that in Tunisia, may explain the failure of the former to keep up with its neighbour. Although the Ben Ali regime was authoritarian, the principal focus of the Tunisian economy on tourism demanded an infrastructure that was able to cater for foreign tourists from Europe and other regions, which will be discussed in a later section. The Libyan regime eroded the state, with the result that the financial and natural resources were shifted into the hands of a small elite, made up of Gaddafi's relatives and cronies. No real incentive for a national infrastructure existed. Interestingly, the prospect of economic gain from bilateral relations created a context where regime-led infrastructure schemes could occur in order to reinforce the regime's power.

The Role of the Private Sector

Tunisia's free market reforms have enabled the private sector to play an increasing role in the economy. Small and medium sized businesses, characterised by factories, projects and companies, have emerged as important players in the production and export processes.⁴⁵³ An industrial economy, initiated under Bourguiba's disorganised modernising reforms, gave Tunisia a skilled workforce in the manufacturing sectors of the economy. Two organisations were founded based on the objective of the development of the Tunisian economy. The Industry Promotion Agency⁴⁵⁴ and its policies have aided the development of the manufacturing industries. Overseas markets were to be targeted by the activities of the Export

⁴⁵¹Ibid.

⁴⁵²Author's Interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial Co-operation Portfolio*. Op cit.

⁴⁵³Author's interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit.

⁴⁵⁴This is a public institution entrusted with executing government policies which aim to promote the industrial sector. It is considered an organisation that assists both the private and public sectors and whose missions could be summarised as facilitating the procedures relating to the industrial sector, conducting studies on future industries, assisting small and medium enterprises, and making available industrial information by documenting and publishing it.

Promotion Centre⁴⁵⁵, to help factories and companies. Representatives were sent abroad to seek new markets for Tunisian products.⁴⁵⁶

Libya's private sector had no real presence from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s. Socialist-inspired policies had outlawed the private ownership of factories and companies that were in opposition to the principles of social justice and equality.⁴⁵⁷ Despite the weakness and the rampant corruption within the public sector, it dominated all aspects of the economy.⁴⁵⁸ International changes had created the conditions for a shift in ideology and policy in Libya and other countries. By the beginning of the 1990s, the USSR had collapsed. Communism's champion, in the form of one of the world's two superpowers, proved to be incapable of keeping up with the capitalist West. Political failure was also a sign of ideological failure. State-owned industries for the benefit of the masses fell out of favour with regimes that were staunchly socialist. Authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, and throughout other regions, began to rethink their economic policies. In the Maghreb, the Algerian military regime had already tried to roll back the socialist policies of previous decades in the 1980s, and this had threatened its stability.

Libya, under the tight control of the Gaddafi regime, abandoned the ideas implemented from *The Green Book* which condemned the evils of the private sector, and praised the virtues of industries owned by the masses. Private enterprises were no longer banned. However, the Libyan private sector was to have a limited role in such significant industries as petroleum processing, even after the 1990s. Continued control and monopoly in this industry by the regime appears to have echoed with Gaddafi's ideas.⁴⁵⁹ One could instead argue that the Libyan regime, composed of Gaddafi and those close to him including family and allies, recognised the intimate relationship between oil and political power. Liberalising the former would lead to losing the latter. Any temptation to privatise the oil sector would lead to either foreign ownership or local and independent control.

⁴⁵⁵ The Centre for Import Promotion is a public organisation which attempts to increase Tunisian exports by advertising Tunisian products abroad in order to find new markets for them. For this purpose, there are representatives of the centre in many countries around the world.

⁴⁵⁶ Author's interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit

⁴⁵⁷ R. Abu Dabbous, *Towards A Social Interpretation of History* (1st edn.: Tripoli, Libya: The International Research Centre for Green Book Studies, 1987). p.164.

⁴⁵⁸ The General People's Committee for Control and Follow-up, Report n financial and administrative corruption, Department of Financial Supervision (ed) (Tripoli, Libya, 1989).

⁴⁵⁹ Author's interview with Mahmoud al-Fatissi, *the former Minister of Industry in Libya*. Op cit

As a result of the increased space made for the Libyan private sector in the early 1990s, micro-enterprises and individual commercial activities became more prominent. Moves towards this particular type of economic activity were motivated by Libya's experience of socialism. The public sector was unable to organise the economy according to the effective redistribution of wealth, self-sufficiency and modernisation. Corruption plagued the bureaucracy that was charged with running the nationalised industries. Despite proactive state intervention to support government-owned companies, their activities led to bankruptcy. The General Company for Markets, tasked with importing and selling basic essentials, such as goods and clothing, was ruined as a result of incompetence and corruption.⁴⁶⁰ Nationalisation of private factories and the restrictions on private property had led to the disappearance of certain domestic products after 1977. Local production, under the public sector, failed to replace these products. Self-sufficiency was not realised. As a result, Libya was forced to start importing to satisfy demand in the economy. When such products were available, they were incapable of competing against their imported equivalents in regard to quality and price.⁴⁶¹

State-imposed restrictions on the private sector created a distinct Libyan economy. Socialism, reinterpreted by Gaddafi, replaced the commercial sector with public companies. No room was made for the private sector in either the domestic economy or in bilateral Libyan-Tunisian relations. However, changes in Libya created the conditions for its re-emergence as a driving force in both areas. Increases in trade exchange point to the presence of businesses. A former senior Libyan official of the Tunisian-Libyan Chamber of Trade and Commerce noted,

In the mid-1990s, the positive role of the private sector in the development of the economic and commercial relations between the two countries became more prominent. The reason was that Libya had enacted a set of laws, according to which individuals were permitted to own private companies and factories. The latter imported products they needed from the neighbouring countries, and Tunisia was among them.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ Author's Interview with al-Bashir al-Ajili, *the Libyan economics expert*. Op cit.

⁴⁶¹ Author's Interview with Mahmoud al-Fatissi, *the former Minister of Industry in Libya*. Op cit.

⁴⁶² Author's Interview with Mohamed al-Reaid, *the former President of the Libyan Side of of the Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber of Economics*. Op cit

New legislation created the space for Libyan citizens to form their own businesses without breaking any laws. Prior socialist policies were discarded for a relative withdrawal of direct state intervention in some sectors of the economy. Individual entrepreneurship was finally allowed to exist and was recognised by the government to have a positive role in relations between Tunisia and Libya. Businesses began importing from the Maghrebi states, including Tunisia. Ali al-Thawadi similarly believed that the private sector could play a positive role in developing bilateral economic relations and trade exchanges after the Libyan regime's revoking of *The Green Book's* prohibition of private business.⁴⁶³ Space was created for the private sector to make a substantial contribution to fulfilling of the shared interests of Libya and Tunisia. Trade exchange thus increased due to co-operation between businesses on both sides of the border.

Mutual confidence was built between Tunisian and Libyan businessmen. Further, complex procedures imposed by foreign countries encouraged Libyans to prefer to deal with Tunisians in business.⁴⁶⁴ The lowering of trading barriers greatly facilitated a formal and informal environment that was favourable to the creation of durable ties. However, recent events would test these ties. Saeeda Hashisha, a Tunisian government official, highlighted the financial crisis which many Libyan businessmen faced as a result of the Libyan Revolution in 2011, and due to the Security Council Resolutions of 1970 and 1973 that were imposed in the same period.⁴⁶⁵ These resolutions had decreed the freezing of Libyans' bank accounts, thereby inducing a liquidity crisis within Libya's market. Interestingly, Tunisians continued to export their products to war ravaged Libya, confident in the belief that the crisis would end and they would receive payments in the future.⁴⁶⁶ A Tunisian official, who was in charge of trade and commerce co-operation, echoed this sentiment, derived from documents and first-hand experience with Tunisian exporters, that they had exported goods without yet receiving payments. Nonetheless, these same exporters were certain of the compensation of money

⁴⁶³ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ This refers to the Resolutions made by the Security Council during the Libyan Revolution of 2011. They imposed several sanctions on Muammar Gaddafi's regime, most importantly, imposing a no-fly zone over Libya and taking all the necessary actions to protect civilians. As for the content of this Resolution that concerns the financial side, it recommended that the accounts and financial assets of the Libyan national petroleum companies be frozen, in addition to the funds of the Central Bank of Libya. Again, the freeze affected all of the assets owned or managed by the Gaddafi regime in the United Nations' member states.

⁴⁶⁶ Author's Interview with Saeeda Hashisha, *The General Director of the Department of Economic Co-operation and Trade, Ministry of the Economy and Trade of Tunisia*. Op cit

which demonstrates the confidence built during long-term bilateral relations.⁴⁶⁷ The context of a war appears not to have diminished the informal nature of the ties binding the business community across Libya and Tunisia. Cross-border trade can continue without the imagined sense or physical presence of state institutions.

Low transportation costs between Tunisia and Libya and the quick delivery of imported goods contributed to the promotion of trade. Movements of factory products from Tunisia to Libya or in the opposition were much cheaper than those from other countries.⁴⁶⁸ Geography thus played an important role in making these two Maghrebi countries natural trading partners in the absence of ideological, political or personal rivalry between their regimes. A competitive advantage was enjoyed by Tunisian and Libyan products over their counterparts from other countries, due to customs duty exemptions after the signing of the free trade agreement and the implementation of the National Treatment Principle.⁴⁶⁹ Formal privileges that were agreed to through bilateral relations, aimed to work towards a single economic zone where the free movement of goods could take place.

The International Embargo and the Implications for Economic Relations

Following the Lockerbie disaster, international sanctions between 1992 and 2004 targeted Libya's economy. The value of the Libyan Dinar fell in relation to other currencies. In the domestic sphere, overall social conditions deteriorated. High public debt, external under-investment and increasing unemployment, led to social problems and a rising level of violence.⁴⁷⁰ Isolation on the world stage encouraged Libya to look to its immediate neighbourhood. The Maghreb's strategic importance appeared at centre stage. Libya's political leadership had a greater interest in developing economic relations with countries in its region, especially Tunisia.⁴⁷¹ According to the Chancellor of the Tunisian Embassy in Libya:

⁴⁶⁷ Author's Interview with Karim al-Wlaherani, *who is in charge of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic and Commercial Co-operation Portfolio*. Op cit

⁴⁶⁸ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ The General People's Committee of Libya (Libyan Cabinet). 'Report About the Implications of the International Embargo on Libyan', Official Report. (Tripoli, 2008).

⁴⁷¹ Author's interview 'anonymous ', *the Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

Fortunately for Libya, the sanctions were levied on it at a time when it had good relationships with its neighbouring countries, in general, and with Tunisia, in particular. That is to say, those sanctions were imposed after the political relations had been improved, as a result of the political change which took place in Tunisia in 1987. We could not imagine the situation had those sanctions been levied during the period of political tension between Libya and its surrounding countries, especially with Tunisia during the rule of Habib Bourguiba, and with Egypt during the rule of Anwar al-Sadat. It was a period of mutual hostility.⁴⁷²

Although the geopolitical context of Libya had changed in its favour with the absence of hostile leaders. International sanctions forced it to rely on nearby states for relief more than in previous years. Indeed, this would not have been possible if Bourguiba or Anwar al-Sadat were in power. The assassinated Egyptian President had once described Gaddafi using the unkind phrase '*al-walad al-majnun*' (the crazy boy). Ronald Reagan, former President of the USA, called the Libya leader a 'mad dog' at the lowest point of bitter Libyan-American relations in the 1980s. At the end of the 1980s, Gaddafi's Arab neighbours were less hostile, while the USA continued to regard him as a menace to its interests and world peace. A new context emerged allowing Gaddafi to foster friendly links with Tunisia or Egypt to mitigate the negative effects of the sanctions which sought to stifle his regime.

Improved political relations inevitably impacted on the economic ties between Tunisia and Libya. While Tunisian investors and exporters displayed a great interest in the Libyan market, Libyan merchants preferred Tunisian goods over those coming from other foreign countries. Tunisian products were considered to be the primary import option in light of their good reputation and competitive edge in the Libyan economy.⁴⁷³ International sanctions, for the former President of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber, forced Libyans to use Tunisian airports which soon led to the importation of products from the neighbouring country as a close alternative.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷² Author's interview with al-Hashmi al-Ajili, *the Chancellor at the Tunisian Embassy in Libya*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

⁴⁷³ Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

⁴⁷⁴ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. op cit.

al-Habib al-Homami argues that the effects of the 1992 sanctions on the development of bilateral economic co-operation between Tunisia and Libya were generally exaggerated. No prohibition on the entry of foreign goods or ships to Libya was imposed. Maritime traffic still continued. Libyan traders were not prevented from travelling or dealing with global companies. Money exchanges between Libyan and international banks, including those in the USA, persisted.⁴⁷⁵ The blockade against Libya mainly targeted the regime through preventing Libyan government officials from travelling. In the economic sphere, air traffic from and to Libya was banned, as well as the selling of spare parts which could be used in the petroleum industry.⁴⁷⁶

The indirect effects of sanctions were noted by the former Libyan President of the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. Although these effects were positive, they were considered secondary in value. Instead, the integration-oriented policies of both regimes were instrumental in developing bilateral economic relations. Abandonment of state-ideologies, accompanied by other internal and external factors, such as the international embargo on Libya, sustained this development.⁴⁷⁷ A former Libyan Minister of the Economy also argued that the emphasis on improving commercial relations as a first step towards economic integration was a primary factor.⁴⁷⁸

These interviewees also indicated that the Libyan regime found an opportunity, due to the new context created by sanctions, to pursue short-term economic projects and infrastructures. Spending on military armaments was one example based on the goal of guaranteeing Libya's military superiority in the region and for the support of rebel movements on the African continent.⁴⁷⁹ Petroleum revenues were stored as cash reserves for instances of emergency, such as the imposing of new sanctions by the UN or the West, namely the USA, Britain and France.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁵ Author's Interview with al-Habib al-Homami, *the Director of the Tunisian Commercial Attaché in Libya*. Op cit.

⁴⁷⁶ United Nations Security Council, Resolution No 748 concerning sanctions imposed on Libya, International resolution, (New York: March 31st, 1992)

⁴⁷⁷ Author's Interview with Abdullah al-Harrari, *the former Head of the Libyan side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee*. Op cit

⁴⁷⁸ Author's interview, 'Anonymous', *the former Libyan Minister of the Economy*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

⁴⁷⁹ Author's Interview with Abdullah al-Harrari, *the former Head of the Libyan side in the Executive Secretariat at the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee*. Op cit

⁴⁸⁰ The General People's Committee of Finance (Ministry of Finance). 'A Report Directed to the General People's Congress (Parliament)', Budget Department (ed). Official Report. (Tripoli, Libya: 1993).

Nour-Eddin al-Alawi argued the austerity experienced by Libya was deliberately produced by Gaddafi. He wanted to present to Libyans an image of himself as being besieged by the West. Several slogans were raised, such as “Life on bread and water alone”, that aimed to justify the absence of genuine plans in Libya.⁴⁸¹ A former Libyan Economy Minister agrees with this view that:

Decreasing the public expenditure and making no plans for development represent the policies which the Libyan ruling system had adopted, even before the international embargo. We still have recollections of the austerity which the country underwent in the 1980s, and which Libyan citizens called “The Lean Years”, because they had suffered significant shortages in staple goods. This was despite the fact that the country had not undergone a blockade.⁴⁸²

Economic crises were already present during the 1980s prior to the sanctions. Previous socialist policies did not have the desired effect of development. The opposite had actually happened, with the Libyan economy suffering a shortage of essential goods due to an ill-informed development plan and rampant corruption in the public sector, which took over the functions of private enterprise. Dwindling public expenditure indicated that the state was unable to pay for the ambitious projects conceived by Gaddafi in *The Green Book* and in his speeches.

A different point of view was also expressed by officials and experts who were interviewed on the subject of the impact of international sanctions on Libya. These sanctions were very important in encouraging the development of economic relations between Tunisia and Libya. A marked increase in the volume of trading exchanges is cited as the strongest piece of evidence to support this position. Libyan businessmen were forced to rely more and more on Tunisian ports to import goods from abroad during the blockade. These ports acquired a crucial role in the absence of similar facilities in Libya. I mentioned earlier the inability of the public sector to function effectively, which also impacted on the administration and services present in Libyan ports. No government plans were made to develop the transport facilities on the country's coastline. A complicated process for goods arriving in Libya was subject to their storage for very long periods of time before coming into the possession of Libyan

⁴⁸¹ Author's Interview with Nour-Eddin al-Alawi, *the Tunisian thinker and University Professor of Sociology*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2012). Op cit.

⁴⁸² Author's Interview 'anonymous', *the former Libyan Minister of the Economy*. Op cit

importers. Instead, Tunisian ports were used to import overseas goods for the Libyan economy.⁴⁸³

The high quality nature of Tunisian products gave them a competitive dimension in the Libyan economy over similar ones from other countries.⁴⁸⁴ Building materials were a large component of the increasing volume of trade between the two countries. Compliance with international standards and low costs for transportation, including their storage in Libya, stimulated a high demand for them. The storage depots are located in western Libya, which makes up 70% of the country's markets. Short distances between Tunisian ports and the factories of production, and Libyan storage depots, are additional factors enabling Tunisian goods to be delivered quickly and cheaply. Foreign goods are, in comparison, far more expensive. One challenge which presents itself is the need for the purchasing of a large quantity of a product, e.g., a full vessel load.⁴⁸⁵ Purchases of cement from Italy or Greece require the transportation of supplies using large ships, whose full load could reach 13,000 to 25,000 tons. Small and medium-sized businesses in the building materials sector are unable to afford to make such purchases, and this is accompanied by the challenges of storage according to long-term storage standards. However, Libyan merchants could turn to the more accessible Tunisian economy for cheaper products in smaller quantities, using import land routes.⁴⁸⁶

Unpredictability and Differences in Regulations

National rules and regulations can be an obstacle to trade across countries. Smooth economic co-operation between states depends on enabling foreign companies to carry out their activities without bureaucratic red tape. Further, a harmonisation of rules can help in this area. Economic integration, in the medium and long terms, becomes a possibility when a standardisation of regulations is introduced. From the mid-1990s, Tunisia and Libya have begun such a process, with the formation of a joint committee for this purpose. However, the

⁴⁸³ Author's interview with Saeed Ibrahim, *the Chancellor of Libyan Ports and Maritime Transport Administration*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

⁴⁸⁴ Author's interview with Jalal al-Tabib, *the Director of Foreign Investment Promotion Agency and the Promotion of the High-Tech Sector*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

⁴⁸⁵ Author's Interview with Ali al-Thawadi, *the former Chairman of the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber and an economics expert*. Op cit.

⁴⁸⁶ Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the Former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

drive towards the standardisation or harmonisation of regulations has not been realised.⁴⁸⁷ The former Tunisian Commercial Attaché in Libya attributes this failure to the fact that:

Despite the existence of a committee which specialises in long-term planning for the future of the relationships, and that attempts to standardise the rules and regulations, neither was a Bill introduced, nor was real action shown by official authorities who were in charge of bilateral relations. It was not possible to standardise rules which are based on the two conflicting ideological perspectives that are held by the two countries. The Libyan laws were based on the socialist economic system, which believed in the monopoly of the state over all economic activities. By contrast, the Tunisian laws were based on capitalism, which gives importance to the private sector in the country's economic life.⁴⁸⁸

No political will appears to have been present to implement a mutual process of harmonisation. As a result, there was a lack of legislation on the issue. A major challenge to integration appears to have emerged from the different ideologies espoused by the regimes in Tripoli and Tunis. Socialist Libya was at odds with capitalist Tunisia in the area of law. The gulf between the two different legal systems was not easily bridged. Indeed, there were efforts, especially in the formal spheres of politics and the economy, to reduce the continued influence of state-sponsored ideologies. Libya's difficulties can be located in the weakness of the state, with the Gaddafi regime in control mainly through an informal network of alliances among clans, tribes and businessmen. Socialism in Libya was simply the transfer of the country's resources to this network of individuals and groups, with Gaddafi at its head.

The former President of the Co-operation department at the Libyan Foreign Ministry noted that a wide gulf separated the content of official meetings and the situation on the ground. Political will to initiate change was missing. Proposals for rules were suggested by officials and ministers. The national regulations for Libya and Tunisia continued to differ in a situation where Libyan rules only concerned Libyans, and Tunisian rules for Tunisians.⁴⁸⁹ The expectations of importers and exporters in both countries of the joint customs directory were not met, according to the Director of the Ras Ajdir Customs Centre. Although it

⁴⁸⁷ Author's Interview with Mahmoud al-Fatissi, *the former Minister of Industry in Libya*. Op cit

⁴⁸⁸ Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, the Former Tunisian Commercial Attaché. Op cit.

⁴⁸⁹ Author's interview 'Anonymous' *the Director of the Co-operation Department in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Op cit.

stipulated their rights and duties, including the documents needed for the customs clearance procedures, differences remained in these rights and duties in Tunisia and Libya.⁴⁹⁰ Two sectors of the economy were badly affected due to the stark differences in national regulations. Tourism and banking did suffer from the lack of harmonisation undertaken by both the regimes and the government agencies that were concerned with the economy.

Tourism and Unpredictability

Tourism is a sector with potential cross-border growth. In recent decades, political instability has discouraged tourists from visiting. However, Tunisia has developed a state-backed tourist sector since the 1960s. Heavy investment in an infrastructure that is able to cater to foreign visitors in the country was initiated.⁴⁹¹ Bourguiba's reign did not neglect this area of the economy. Tunisia's heritage was marketed to the West with successful results. A similar policy was pursued by Ben Ali in the years after Bourguiba fell from power. Authoritarian rules stifled opposition politics in an attempt to make Tunisia a stable society. Dissenting voices were either exiled or imprisoned, e.g., the members of the Islamist Renaissance Movements. Libya, under Gaddafi, acquired the reputation of being a pariah state. The country's tourist sector suffered as a result. The removal of sanctions in 2004 started a process of diplomatic acceptance of Libya on the world stage. An overall growth in tourism in the Maghreb also saw Libya's tourist sector grow by 8.4% in 2007.⁴⁹²

State-sponsored infrastructure development, complemented by private enterprise in the region, continued in the first decade of the 20th century. Cross-border tourism received attention from governments in Tunisia and Libya. A series of agreements between the ministries of tourism in these two countries aimed to encourage tourist exchanges and eliminate all barriers. Tourist offices were subsequently opened and their responsibilities were the facilitation of participation in tourism exhibitions, the exchange of experts in this sector and lending of Tunisian expertise to the service of the Libyan tourist sector. The opposite effect had occurred. According to the Director of the International Co-operation Department at the Tunisian Tourist Ministry, officials and investors were obstructed from

⁴⁹⁰ Author's Interview with al-Taher Futaissi, *the Director of the Ras Al- Gader border crossing between Libya and Tunisia*. (Zuwarah, Libya, 2013).

⁴⁹¹ I.T. Christie et al., *Tourism in Africa: Harnessing Tourism for Growth and Improved Livelihoods* (World Bank Publications, 2014), pp. 264-263.

⁴⁹² Oxford Business Group, *the Report: Tunisia 2008*, (Oxford: Oxford Business Group, 2008), p. 109.

implementing the agreements made due to a difference in, and clash of, domestic laws.⁴⁹³ The agreed creation of a tourist-cultural desert route, stretching from the south of Tunisia to the south of Libya, faced a major obstacle. Foreign tourists from outside the Maghreb needed visas, in compliance with the principle of Reciprocal Treatment, as European countries required a visa from Libyan nationals. In Tunisia, in light of the fact that tourism is one of the main sources of national income, overseas visitors could enter without a visa.⁴⁹⁴

Political circumstances in Libya appear to have led to unstable results in the tourist industry. The Tunisian tourism representative in Libya pointed to the unpredictable application of its entry rules.⁴⁹⁵ Libya's President of the Libyan-Tunisian Sectoral Committee on Tourism shared this opinion. The unpredictability of the regulations was a major impediment to cross-border tourist development at this stage.⁴⁹⁶ Libyan efforts to improve relations with France led to the cancellation of the visa requirement for French tourists. Trips to both Libya and Tunisia in organised tours could occur without the hindrance of needing to obtain entry documents. Libya soon, however, revoked this agreement without notice, to the shock of tourist operators organising flights from France to Libya. As a result, French tourists were prevented from entering Libya, and their planes were instead forced to arrive at Djerba International Airport in Tunisia.⁴⁹⁷

An overnight reversal of rules governing entry requirements severely damaged the reputation of Libya's tourist companies. Political interference in the actual rules of the economy, supported by the security services, was clearly apparent. Bilateral relations and co-operation in tourism, in particular, received a heavy blow. In this respect, the former Director of the Department of Tourism Companies at the General People's Committee for Tourism in Libya stated:

Many of the companies which were licensed to work in the field of tourism and complementary activities are owned by Libyan Intelligence Agents, or by their collaborators. Among the conditions to meet in order to have the right to work in

⁴⁹³ Author's interview with Mona Ghalis, *the Director of the International Co-Operation Department at the Tunisian Ministry of Tourism*. (Tunis, Tunisia, 2013).

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Author's interview with Shokri Sharad, *the Tunisian Representative of the Ministry of Tourism in Libya*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

⁴⁹⁶ Author's interview with Abed al-Salam al-Falah, *the Chairman of Libyan side of the Tunisian-Libyan Sectoral Committee on Tourism*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2012).

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

tourism was the need to gain approval from some Libyan public administration organisations, including the Libyan Intelligence Agency.⁴⁹⁸

The intrusion of the Libyan security services into tourism involved actual ownership of companies. Commercial interests and national security issues were intertwined. The security services appear to have had a prominent role in a growing sector in the economy, with the power to stifle it if deemed necessary. Surveillance also took place through the placing of intelligence agents as tourist guides or as drivers escorting foreign tourists on trips that were organised by security services' owned companies.⁴⁹⁹ A key actor in Gaddafi's authoritarian regime was able to easily develop a commercial stake in the Libyan economy for financial profit and political control.

Banking and Continuing Differences

The banking sector in the Maghreb appears to be strongly influenced by national factors in a neo-liberal global context. The nationalisation of the banks in Libya after the coup d'état in 1969, was primarily motivated by the elimination of the legacy of colonialism.⁵⁰⁰ Foreign control of this key sector of the economy was rejected. Gaddafi's socialism was also intensely anti-imperialist. The authoritarian practices adopted to modernise Libya contributed to an environment where private enterprise was legally banned. Tunisia's state played a leading role in the financial sector through the formation of a central bank and three developmental banks in the early years of Bourguiba's reign.⁵⁰¹ The independence leader aimed to stimulate private enterprise through the financial muscle of the state. Libya's socialism was in direct contrast to Tunisia's capitalism in an extremely polarised global context. Important changes after the Cold War stimulated a change of policy within the regime. Towards the end of the 20th century, the Tunisian financial sector continued to be largely controlled by the state, alongside recently privatised banks.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ Author's interview 'Anonymous', *the former Director of the Tourism Companies Department at the General Libyan People's Committee of Tourism*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2013).

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ronald Bruce St John, *Historical Dictionary of Libya* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), p. 53.

⁵⁰¹ Christopher Alexander, *Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 70.

⁵⁰² Clement Moore Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 96-97.

Tripoli hosted a meeting in 1991 to discuss the establishment of a bank specifically for the Maghreb, which later became a reality in the form of the Maghreb Bank in 2010.⁵⁰³ A mixture of regimes with different ideologies was able to create a common financial institution dedicated to economic integration. This was followed by legal reforms in the banking sector by member-states such as Algeria, in 2003; Libya, in 2005; Morocco, in 2005, and Tunisia in 2006, which aimed to strengthen their central banks.⁵⁰⁴ Bilateral relations were thus based on the establishment of departments which could provide financial support and advice to investors in Libyan banks in Tunisia, and the same was true for Tunisian banks in Libya. However, the development of banking services did not keep up with the growth of inter-state commercial trade.⁵⁰⁵ A former Governor of Libya's Central Bank observed that banks did not contribute to the standardisation of services and financial policies in the two countries when their trade exchange rose from 50 million TND in 1987, to 2.5 billion TND in 2010.⁵⁰⁶

The harmonisation of rules by the Tunisian and Libyan central banks was not established. Mutual decision-making on fiscal and monetary policies, such as the unification of currencies or the use of national currencies between companies in the other country, did not take place. The preceding points could have contributed to the development of economic co-operation through a common ground of trade exchanges. Mechanisms for the transfer of money between companies, private or public, according to the Manager of the Commercial Department representing Tunisia in Libya, were not created by the two countries. The existence of specialised financial committees lacked actual implementation in this area, as they were only charged with studying and offering solutions to difficulties experienced in the banking sector.⁵⁰⁷ Numerous instances of the formalisation of bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya indicate the ineffectiveness of such institutions in fostering economic integration. Their existence has not stimulated changes in the entrenched financial practices of two very different systems, with their own particular historical experiences.

⁵⁰³ Oxford Business Group, *The Report: Algeria 2011* (Oxford: Oxford Business Group, 2011), p. 87.

⁵⁰⁴ J. Sole et al., *Financial Sector Reforms and Prospects for Financial Integration in Maghreb Countries* (International Monetary Fund, 2007). p. 18.

⁵⁰⁵ Author's Interview with Tariq Ben Kabir, *the Former Tunisian Commercial Attaché*. Op cit.

⁵⁰⁶ Author's interview' Anonymous', *the Former Governor of Libya's Central Bank*. (Tripoli, Libya, 2012).

⁵⁰⁷ Author's Interview with al-Habib al-Homami, *the Director of the Tunisian Commercial Attaché in Libya*. Op cit.

Conclusion

I have discussed various aspects of bilateral Libyan-Tunisian relations since 1987, in a changing political context. Ben Ali's regime undertook a remarkable reversal of official policy concerning its neighbour Libya. Political and economic links between the countries were a priority. Gaddafi reciprocated the moves towards greater co-operation, with a personal and public show of breaking down a Libyan-Tunisian border crossing in a tractor. His previous ideological positions seem to have been relegated to make way for good neighbourly associations that were based on mutual economic benefits. International sanctions appear to have influenced the Libyan regime to pursue better relations with bordering countries in order to bring relief to an economy that was badly hit by trading restrictions. Interestingly, a debate has emerged concerning whether these sanctions were a primary factor, or merely a secondary one, in initiating an improvement in bilateral ties. The black market had satisfied the bilateral economic relations of these two Maghrebi nations. In Libyan border towns, 'the Tunisian Souk' appeared when Gaddafi imposed a period of austerity in the 1980s. However, the formalisation of trading exchanges became an appealing prospect to both Tunisian and Libyan decision-makers.

Private enterprise in Libya was, to an extent, revived after being illegal from the mid-1970s until the late 1980s. Although more freedom was granted to individuals to pursue economic activity in the Libyan economy, the lack of harmonisation of rules and procedures relating to commerce was an obstacle. Businessmen from both Tunisia and Libya had to experience two different legal systems in order to carry out cross-border trade. The National Treatment Principle and the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber played a prominent role in fostering closer relations between the Tunisian and Libyan economies. Goods from both countries were to be treated equally, without the imposition of customs duties, thereby making them more competitive in relation to similar or identical goods from other countries. Nonetheless, the fairness of the National Treatment Principle was questioned in regard to its presumed negative impact on Libyan goods. Similarly, the belief in the mutual benefits to be generated from the existence of organisations that were dedicated to the promotion of bilateral relations, was not shared by all parties involved in improving bilateral relations. Foad Abdel al-Karim, responsible for economic co-operation at the Tunisian embassy in Libya, had identified a glaring deficiency in the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber's objectives. The Chamber did

not formulate a coherent strategy for the joint targeting of new markets while deepening the integration between Tunisia and Libya.

In this chapter, other weaknesses were identified that indicate the arbitrary nature of the regimes in Tunis and Tripoli. The authoritarian structures which formulate and execute decisions were narrowly based on a political elite composed of family members and cronies. A lack of political will, or of interest in certain details of an agreement, may lead to the document being ignored. Further, a later dislike for a signed agreement between countries can also result in it being revoked without any prior warning, such as the exemption from the need for a visa for French tourists visiting Libya. The intrusion of the Libyan security services in key decision-making processes regarding the economy demonstrated the continuing authoritarian nature of the Gaddafi regime. Moreover, their presence was also seen in the ownership of tourist companies and in the surveillance of tourists. The unpredictability of Libyan-Tunisian relations in the economy was thus shaped by the political elite of both countries. Despite the shortfalls in the relations between Tunisia and Libya, much of which is related to the unfulfilled expectations of businessmen and government officials, the political context after 1987 created a new trend towards a substantial improvement in trading ties. A much larger volume of economic exchange was present under policies pursued by Ben Ali and Gaddafi, with an unprecedented degree of co-ordination between national organisations dedicated exclusively to trade and commerce.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND THE BINDING OF COMMERCIAL TIES

Introduction

The previous chapter looked at how changes took place in inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya. There were considerable efforts to co-operate, despite the existence of two very different histories, politics and economies in these neighbouring nations. Nonetheless, economic integration was a major objective for the regimes in Tunis and Tripoli. Chapter 6 undertook a general overview of bilateral relations in a changing context, based on the information collected from interviews. A new period was ushered in after Zine El Abidine Ben Ali overthrew Habib Bourguiba in 1987, with the subsequent improvement in Libyan-Tunisian ties which had previously been frozen since 1985. Various levels of co-operation were initiated between Libya and Tunisia that aimed to bring these two countries closer together. This chapter will examine how the formation of regional organisations coincided with an increased volume of cross-border trade between Tunisia and Libya. Investment in the two nations also became an area of joint activity. In the Maghreb, the bilateral relations between these two states stood as an example of the restoration of ties after decades of hostilities, complemented by economic co-operation. I will analyse official documents collected from state archives in order to establish the motivations behind the improvement in Libyan-Tunisian relations from 1987 until 2010. Further, I am interested in seeing to what extent the decline of ideology had an impact on this situation.

I will carry out analysis of the official documents in five sections in this chapter. The first part examines the founding of regional organisations, such as the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union. Libya and Tunisia were part of both organisations, but with different motivations driving their policies in the Maghreb and Africa. International sanctions had forced Libya to alleviate its political, diplomatic and economic isolation through the creation of closer links with Tunisia and other African countries. Tunisia's economy was based on foreign direct investment and the international flow of capital. Africa was home to potential and attractive export markets for its services and products. Tunisia and Libya co-operated in the Maghreb and Africa to achieve their mutual interests through joint organisations, such as the United Libyan-Tunisian Corporation.

The second part looks at joint commercial policies which involved tax exemptions on customs duties for Tunisian and Libyan goods. Free movement of capital and goods was pursued in both countries. Further, Libyan-Tunisian joint committees were established from the early 1990s in response to the increased volume of cross-border trade. The Maghreb Payment Agreement, signed in December 1991, was a demonstration of the improvement of bilateral relations in the context of the Maghreb and the attempt to formalise it. Institutions were founded for the exclusive function of co-ordinating bilateral relations.

The third part focuses on the rise in the volume of joint commercial exchange between Tunisia and Libya. During the 1990s, Libya became Tunisia's main trading partner in the Arab world and its fifth globally. Laws were passed to formalise the economic ties between the countries, such as the Foreign Trade Company Law in Tunisia. A simple system of import-export was introduced, in an attempt to remove government-imposed customs duties to be paid when moving goods across the Libyan-Tunisian border. There was a marked increase in the volume of bilateral trade, from 1.5 billion Libyan Dinars in 2006, to 3 billion Libyan Dinars in 2009.⁵⁰⁸

The fourth part continues the examination of the formalisation of trade relations between Tunisia and Libya. I examine the unsuccessful efforts to build a customs post in Ras Ajdir. Joint co-operation from the feasibility tests relating to the project to the signing of the agreement to its construction, demonstrated the potential for economic integration. However, setbacks to the project, due to Libya's failure to fulfil its end of the agreement, put the construction of the customs post to a stop. However, bilateral trade between the two nations still continued.

The fifth part examines the drive to encourage economic co-operation through joint investments in both Libya and Tunisia. Government agencies, joint committees and businessmen worked together to explore the opportunities for investors. The Libyan regime perceived economic liberalisation in Tunisia to have been a success, and it sought to mimic its neighbour's economic model of development, with certain qualifications. Economic integration between Libya and Tunisia would lead to these two states looking for potential export markets and investment opportunities in Africa.

⁵⁰⁸ The Libyan Interim Government, 'the Economic Co-operation between Libya and Tunisia', Official Report, Ministry of Economics (ed), (Tripoli: 2013).

Regional integration in the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union

Regional integration in the Arab world has evolved in the last few decades. During the middle of the 20th century, pan-Arabism, influencing Nasser and Gaddafi, was a central feature of ideological politics. Although recent changes have led to new forms of co-operation among Arab states in focusing on specific regions or sub-regions, the idea of integration exerts a strong influence. States generally attempt to acquire a strategic economic partner on a bilateral, group or bloc basis.⁵⁰⁹ The previous expansionist impulse, expressed through revolutions and coup d'états, was replaced by a more gradual and friendly agreements. Libya and Tunisia are two countries which have benefitted from a seeming decline in the impact of ideology in the decision-making processes of their regimes. The promotion of economic, social and political co-operation is a key part of Libyan-Tunisian efforts. In the previous chapter, I mentioned the formation of the Maghreb Bank in 2010, after a meeting of finance ministers of the Maghreb had taken place almost twenty years previously.

Interestingly, the Arab Maghreb Union, preceding the establishment of the regional bank, demonstrated a new and changing, reality with Tunisia and Libya pursuing an improvement in their bilateral ties in a number of areas. Throughout their joint co-operation, Tunisia and Libya tried to present themselves as a political model for other countries in the Maghreb.⁵¹⁰ Joint development projects were implemented that aimed not to conflict with the policies of other Arab states. Libya and Tunisia also attempted to make the Arab Maghreb Union into an effective organisation with a certain degree of influence on member states. There were efforts to resolve the longstanding dispute between Algeria and Morocco, which posed a major stumbling block to co-ordination within the union. Further, the Union's joint institutions were launched by Tunisia and Libya, seeking to boost inter-state co-operation.⁵¹¹

Various problems in the Arab world received the attention of Tunisia and Libya in co-ordination with each other. Iraq's invasion and the occupation of Iraq, after the end of the Cold War, posed a challenge to the Arab states. The Arab Summit was convened in Cairo to

⁵⁰⁹ Nicholas Bayne & Stephen Woolcock, *The New Economic Diplomacy: Decision-Making and Negotiation in International Economic Relations* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2011).

⁵¹⁰The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tripoli 2002).

⁵¹¹The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 17th Session of Meetings of Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tripoli 2004).

discuss this matter, but Tunisia did not attend. Refusal to take part in the Summit was motivated by Tunisian objections to Egypt's rejection of the suggestion to postpone it, and the desire to pursue more diplomatic initiatives to find a peaceful resolution, through the Arab League, of the Iraqi-Kuwait conflict. The summit's decisions, not accepted by Tunisia, paved the way for the American led military coalition against Iraq. Morocco was the only country in the Maghreb which supported the decisions agreed upon in Cairo with Libya, Tunisia and other countries in the region involved in a diplomatic co-ordination against the push for Arab backing for an armed conflict against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. Additionally, there was a call for the lifting of international sanctions and the ending of military attacks on Iraq. The besieged country's nuclear facilities were to be subject to checks and regulations, according to international law. Libya's regime perceived that the latter issue was used by the West as a pretext to carry out the occupation of Iraq in 2003.⁵¹² The Arab Maghreb Union provided Libya with a forum to influence its neighbours, especially Tunisia, to form a united front on issues considered to be important. Tunisia's presence within the union could thus be counted as a source of political support at a time when Libya's isolation on the world stage was yet to end.

A shift towards other forms of collective organisations composed of like-minded states is evident in the Maghreb towards the end of the 20th century. Politics and economics were pivotal factors in identifying shared interests and the means to pursue them. The Arab Maghreb Union was only a manifestation of greater co-operation between Tunisia and Libya, on the one hand, and other states, on the other hand. In Africa, the possibilities for furthering the interests of the countries in the Maghreb become a reality with the formation of the African Union in 2001.⁵¹³ One can argue that Libya saw the African Union as an alternative to the doomed and short-lived unions with Arab states, which had been based on a shared ideology, in the past. The Economic Community of the West African States⁵¹⁴ and the Economic Community of Central African States⁵¹⁵ are expressions of a broader trend towards

⁵¹²The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tripoli, 2001).

⁵¹³ The African Union was established on 26th May, 2001, to replace the African Unity Organisation.

⁵¹⁴ This group was formed in 1975. It included Cape Verde, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. This group aims to facilitate the movement of people, capital, goods and services among its member states. It also aims to co-ordinate joint projects, such as farming, irrigation, transportation, power and scientific research.

⁵¹⁵ This Union was established in 1983, but was activated in 1985. It included Burundi, Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. The Union was also intended to encourage national industries in these countries and to adopt a united system of tax and customs.

regionalism in the African continent. Such organisations, founded for the purpose of economic co-operation, have been unable to impact on the global capitalist system. Member states are mainly poor developing countries which also lack domestic stability in their politics and economies. Unfavourable conditions have caused the failure of economic unions to increase the volume of inter-state and world trade for their members. However, regional and transcontinental unions in Africa continue to play an important role in security issues.⁵¹⁶ Perceptions in Libya of Africa's position revolve around the political engagement through conflict mediation in a continent experiencing civil wars, tribal clashes and armed militias.

Active participation by Tunisia and Libya in African regional groups can be understood as part of broader efforts in the continent as a whole. Although Tunisian relations with the European Union were a priority, the promotion of ties to African regional blocks and states was carried out through the development of joint institutions.⁵¹⁷ The membership of Tunisia and Libya in the African Union and the Community of the Sahel-Saharan States, confirms the existence of a foreign policy that is not necessarily restricted to the Maghreb or Europe. Continent-wide engagement on various issues of concern included the resolution of civil wars and raging conflicts. The two Maghrebi countries appear to have had complementary foreign policies. Tunisian positions on the formation of the African Union and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, echoed those of Libya. The Libyan regime took the lead in stressing the importance of African regional unions. Libyan-Tunisian relations also reflected the Ben Ali regime's policies and interests. Libya promoted a Tunisian conceived plan to establish a global funding scheme to support Africa.⁵¹⁸ A restricted definition of Tunisian identity, examined in Chapter 5, now acknowledged the role of Islam and of Tunisia's place in the Arab world. The notion of the nation-state did not stop Ben Ali from pursuing greater co-operation in the Maghreb, the Arab world and Africa.

Cordial relations between the political elites of both nations were manifested in post-Cold War institutions, which no longer reflected the ideological rivalries of Arabism or socialism. The struggle for development was not understood to be based on revolutionary activities leading to regime change. Instead, foreign direct investment in the private sector, involving

⁵¹⁶The People's Committee for Foreign Relations and International Co-operation, 'Report About the Role of the African Regional Organisations in Solving Conflicts in Africa,' Official Report. (Tripoli ,2008). p.34.

⁵¹⁷Mazyodat, *Alternative Foreign Policy* . op cit, p.14.

⁵¹⁸The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. (Tripoli, Libya: 2003b).

an emerging class of commercial entrepreneurs backed by the ruling elite, was the solution to previous decades of underdevelopment and failed socialist policies. A foreign policy initiative from Tunisia, which received Libyan backing, was the hosting of an international conference to identify and formulate global policies that were intended to help Africa. Agreement of the existence of common interests in Africa, between Tunisia and Libya, was an essential move towards strengthening bilateral relations on issues outside the Maghreb. African markets were seen as potential export markets for the goods of these two states. There are thus a number of combined capital investment programmes in the continent. The United Libyan-Tunisian Corporation, which has played a leading role in this area, is considered to be a joint policy tool for the African goals of Libya and Tunisia.⁵¹⁹

Commercial Joint Policies

Better political relations between Ben Ali and Gaddafi enabled a remarkable rise in commercial Libyan-Tunisian co-operation from the late 1980s and early 1990s. Combined efforts to overcome previous ideological and personal differences led to a friendly atmosphere in the Maghreb. The Maghreb Payment Agreement, signed by Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia, on 12th December, 1991, was an expression of the trend towards co-ordinating the activities of the central banks of the Maghreb region. Mutually reinforcing policies were implemented that were favourable to cross-border trade. Many agreements were signed by Tripoli and Tunis on a wide range of commercial ties. New rules on customs duties for imported goods and import-export regulations aimed to facilitate a smooth expansion of trade exchange through the formalisation of bilateral relations. Produced and manufactured goods received tax exemptions, in order to encourage businesses from both countries to sell and buy from each other. Further, new policies were formulated to allow the free movement of capital and investment, with a 1973 agreement in this area renewed.⁵²⁰

Since the early 1990s, Libyan-Tunisian joint committees have attempted to help small sized businesses to increase the trade volume between the nations. These committees produced a number of policies and measures that aimed to raise the level of joint consultation among

⁵¹⁹The Tunisian and Libyan Joint Company For Investment, 'Minutes of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Company with the Tunisian Investment and Business Companies', (Tripoli: The Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006).

⁵²⁰The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. (Tripoli, 1994).

specialised institutions that were present in their countries. Export centres and integrated Chambers of Commerce and Industry were also a crucial part.⁵²¹ A set of means for the expansion of bilateral trade was to be adopted, as stipulated in the Co-operation Agreement signed on 30th July, 1996, between the Libyan Export and Import Bureau and the Tunisian Centre for Export Promotion. This was followed by the Mutual Management Agreement of 27th November, 1997, tackling customs-related offences. Extensive formalisation of the trade taking place between Tunisia and Libya focused on enabling the flow of goods across borders and the empowerment of government agencies, or those affiliated to them, to implement and punish according to official policy. Exemptions from the submission of financial guarantees on goods imported into Tunisia by Libyan public corporations were granted. Additionally, transport trucks moving between Libya and Tunisia received an exemption from paying customs duties. Positive encouragement of a two way free movement of goods was the stated aim.⁵²²

The strengthening of bilateral ties happened while UN imposed sanctions on Libya were gathering pace. As a result, Libya's capacity for growth was hurt. Tunisia was able to alleviate some of the negative effects of international political and economic isolation on Libyan society. Several economic concessions by the Libyans were granted to Tunisian imports, in light of the closer associations being made. Many formerly banned goods from Tunisia were permitted to enter the Libya economy. This measure was a result of the activities of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.⁵²³ Such an approach to the issue of cross-border trade, seeking to remove legal constraints on imports from Tunisia, can be perceived to be a compromise with the Libyan regime's official policy for the economic protection of Libyan goods. However, it can also be understood as a response to the deterioration of the economy in Libya in an unmanageable context. Indeed, the system of international sanctions had made itself felt by both the Libyan regime and the wider population. Libyan companies became incapable of supplying enough goods to meet local demand. High prices for raw materials and other problems in the production process, emerged. Further, Libya's national currency was devalued on the global market. Interestingly, Tunisia was able to benefit from the critical situation Libya was going through. Its financial

⁵²¹The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 9th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. (Tripoli, 1995).

⁵²²The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 10th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tripoli, 1996).

⁵²³The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the Half-Year Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tunis, Tunisia, 2005a).

returns increased, thanks to the expansion of commercial deals between the two Maghrebi nations. Tunisian products, and imported foreign goods using ports in Tunisia, were part of the general trend towards closer economic ties.

Decisions from the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee had a vital impact on the promotion of trading activities. An increase in co-ordination between the Chambers of Commerce and businessmen was agreed in the 13th round of the meetings of this committee. Private enterprises were to be encouraged in the two countries. Approval of several twinning agreements between economic and commercial organisations resulted from the policy of state backed stimulation of the private sector. The Chambers of Commerce which established twinning arrangements were Tripoli and Tunis, Benghazi and Bizerte, Misrata and Sfax, and Zawya and Sousse. Goods and services were able to flow in both directions without hindrance from restrictive rules on imports. Bilateral initiatives, such as the ones discussed above, created the impetus for Libyan and Tunisian businessmen to urge the decision-makers in their countries to consider enacting more legal and economic legislation to support cross-border trading opportunities.⁵²⁴ Official acknowledgement of the commercial interests points to the top-down management of economic reform, which was nonetheless trying to make Tunisia and Libya more responsive to private capital.

Joint plans were formulated, underpinned by the aim to expand commercial activities. A free trade zone was the subject of a 2001 agreement between Tunisia and Libya. The formation of joint projects without the imposition of customs duties and burdensome bureaucratic procedures, would allow the mutual and easy flow of goods and services.⁵²⁵ I will now quote a passage from the agreement to show its aims:

The two parties will fully exempt all of the goods from customs and duties, similar to those applied in other countries. This includes all of the goods and products, as prescribed in Article Three of the Agreement.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁴The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tunis, Tunisia, 2000).

⁵²⁵Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Free Zone Agreement between Libya and Tunisia..', in The Libyan Ministry Of Commerce (ed.), Governmental Agreement .(Tripoli, 2001b). Article 2.

⁵²⁶ Governmental Agreement, 'The Free Zone Agreement between Libya and Tunisia.' op cit, Article 3.

An atmosphere of free trade was the intended result, with the unhindered traffic of goods to and from Tunisia and Libya. Elimination of customs duties was a necessary step for economic integration. This agreement accepted that products made or manufactured in the neighbouring nations were to be regarded as national products in both territories, in line with the National Treatment Principle.⁵²⁷ At least 40% of the percentage of the value added to a product had to be from the national country in order to qualify for an exemption of customs duties. In contrast, they agreed to a percentage of 60% for products from other Arab Maghreb countries. Products would have to gain a certificate of origin⁵²⁸ from an authoritative body, such as the Chambers of Commerce and Quality Standards. Facilitation of the trade of goods between Tunisia and Libya according to the system based on the certificate of origin, implied a mutual recognition of the authority of the certificate-producing power of the other country's national organisations.⁵²⁹ There were also moves towards the unification of technical standards and laws, through the use of relevant information and packaging systems.

Participation in regional and international exhibitions was an area of joint concern for Tunisia and Libya. The introduction of their national products to other potential economic parties was the key objective.⁵³⁰ Consequently, exhibitions were held in these two countries, accompanied by the plan to host more in other parts of the African continent.⁵³¹ Establishment of the Libyan-Tunisian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry⁵³² was a direct result of the joint efforts of the Libyan Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Tunisian Union of Commerce and Industry. Development of economic activities in their countries was a goal of this federation, seeking to co-ordinate institutions devoted to commerce, and to work towards their future integration. The federation was charged with administrative tasks in support of economic co-operation between Libya and

⁵²⁷ This means that the products and goods coming from the other country are treated in the same way, and equally with, national products.

⁵²⁸ The 'Certificate of Origin' is a document given by designated authorities in both Libya and Tunisia to show that goods exported to the other country comply with its standards, as set according to the standards agreed by the two countries.

⁵²⁹ Libyan and Tunisian Government, 'The Co-operation Agreement between Libya and Tunisia On the Certificate of Origin', in The Libyan Ministry Of Commerce (ed.), Governmental Agreement (Tripoli, 2005). Article One.

⁵³⁰ Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵³¹ Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵³² The federation was established in 1989. It represents the private sectors in the two countries. It consists of a general assembly and a board of directors. Tunis is the headquarters of this federation, which has another branch in Tripoli.

Tunisia.⁵³³ Growing awareness of the common interests of Libya and Tunisia led to changes in the area of rules governing imports and exports. Bilateral economic co-operation through the formulation of joint policies was influenced by organisations formed exclusively for this purpose. A top-down approach that focused on the formalisation of trading exchanges appears not to have been subject to the ideology of the political elites of Libya and Tunisia. Other sectors of the economy experienced similar moves to shift economic co-operation from the informal sector to the formal sphere of joint projects.

The Volume of Joint Commercial Transactions

In the period prior to the 1990s, the trade exchange between Tunisia and Libya did not reflect the geographical proximity of the two nations, in comparison with other countries or regions.⁵³⁴ However, a relatively larger volume of commercial transactions prevailed after Ben Ali ousted Bourguiba in a bloodless coup. Gaddafi was fully aware of the potential of a transformation in Libyan-Tunisian relations in the political sphere, with widespread implications for his oil-based economy. As a result of a mutual building of confidence, Libya became Tunisia's chief Arab trading nation. And it is its fifth global partner, after France, Italy, Germany and Spain.⁵³⁵ Tunisian exports to Libya until 1993 appear not to have exceeded 3.4% of total Libyan imports. By 2003, however, it had increased to 51% of Tunisian exports to Arab countries. Imports from Libya reached a figure of 47% from countries of the Arab world.⁵³⁶

The expansion of cross-border trade demonstrated in the previous import and export statistics can be attributed to the low cost of transportation between Libya and Tunisia. Simpler frameworks of rules, approved by Tunisia, seeking to encourage Libyan businessmen to invest, may also explain the rise in trade volume. The Foreign Trade Company Law is an example of the formalisation of bilateral relations targeting private capital from neighbouring Libya, by the state. It is estimated that 35% of Tunisian exports are from companies

⁵³³ See the The Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber Of Economics, 'The Basic Law of The Joint Tunisian-Libyan Chamber Of Economics', Government Agreement. (1989).

⁵³⁴ Gregory White, *A Comparative Political Economy of Tunisia and Morocco: On the Outside of Europe Looking In*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2001), p. 110.

⁵³⁵ The Libyan Interim Government, 'The Economic Co-operation between Libya and Tunisia', Official Report, Ministry of Economics (ed), (Tripoli: 2013).

⁵³⁶ The Libyan Central Bank 'The Foreign Trade During 1993-2002', Annual Report. (Tripoli: 2003). p.25.

registered under this law.⁵³⁷ In light of the aforementioned discussion, I argue that the general expansion of economic ties between Libya and Tunisia is a product of several interlinked policies. The removal of the regulations previously hindering bilateral trade activities was one such key policy. Further, the implementation of the Joint Economic Agreement in 2003, followed by other similar agreements in 2007, opened up opportunities for the rise in the trade volume. The policy of generating mutual benefits from economic co-operation appears to have relegated ideology, whether Arabism or socialism, from the calculations of inter-state relations by the political elites in Tripoli or Tunis. The previous personal rivalry, perhaps a product of ideology, too, was absent. Ben Ali and Gaddafi displayed a cordial relationship, based on the development of their countries through foreign direct investment and commercial exchange. The high volume of trade after the 1990s can thus be seen to demonstrate the decline of ideology in a context different from that of the period between 1969 and 1987.

The value of the volume of the cross-border trade increased from 1.5 billion Libyan Dinars in 2006, to 3 billion in 2009.⁵³⁸ However, the volume of economic activity with other countries in the Maghreb did not exceed 800 million Libyan Dinars.⁵³⁹ In the Maghreb, the growth of bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya was accompanied by greater financial incentives. A doubling of the value of commercial transactions in 2009, after 2006 confirms the existence of a favourable political climate that was not largely affected by instability generated by ideologically-motivated policies. Economic growth appears to have had a stronger influence in shaping the direction of Libyan-Tunisian ties than does the dogged pursuing of the regime's official ideology. Most of the Libyan exports to Tunisia were oil-based products, such as diesel, petrol, gas and gasoline. Exports from Tunisia, however, were markedly different. Diverse goods, such as foodstuffs, electrical and mechanical devices, building supplies, crossed into Libya. A complementary import-export relationship existed between the two countries. Imported goods from both countries were not necessarily competing against their local counterparts. Moreover, this mutual advantage allowed the products of both countries to compete from a position of strength against foreign goods. A protectionist policy for their joint interests was put in place. Moves towards economic

⁵³⁷al-Habib al-Homami, 'The Reality of the Libyan Economy and the Future Plan', Official Report. Tunisian Commercial Attaché In Libya, (Benghazi, Libya, 2011).p3.

⁵³⁸ The Libyan Interim Government, 'Economic Co-operation between Libya and Tunisia', Official Report, op cit.

⁵³⁹General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union, 'Economic Activities among Countries of the Union,' Official Report, (Rabat, 2010). p.27.

integration were based on maintaining a simple system of import-export rules, which reduced the costs of moving goods from one country to another that, was generated by government-imposed duties.

Two observations can be made about the weaknesses generated by the joint policy on boosting inter-state commercial exchange. The first observation concerns specific products that were exclusively for the Libyan economy. Continued Tunisian exports will suffer if its economy suffers from fluctuations in demand. The second observation relates to the fact that Tunisian companies which export, directly or indirectly, their products to Libya, constitute only 16% of the total number of national export companies. A large number of them export more than 50% of their products to Libya. At the same time, the share of these companies in the total amount of Tunisian exports to other countries is just 5%.⁵⁴⁰ There thus exists a large potential to develop Tunisia's stake in the Libyan economy through encouraging companies to invest in their production capacities. State-led initiative could focus on improving the transportation of infrastructure between Tunisia and Libya through the building and maintaining of road, railway lines and ports. However, political events can very easily unsettle a cross-border trade that is dependent on a high level of security. In post-Gaddafi Libya, after the Libyan Revolution of 2011, concerns were raised about the future of Libyan-Tunisian relations. The Tunisian Trade Office in Tripoli underlined these concerns in a special report in June, 2011. It highlighted that the new economic, political and security status in Libya after the 2011 Revolution would inevitably affect economic relations between the two countries. Accordingly, the Tunisian public and private sectors would need to address these developments. A plan would have to be formulated for the short and long-term maintenance of Tunisian economic interests in Libya.⁵⁴¹

Additionally, the report concluded that Tunisian exports to Libya would be adversely affected in the near future, especially in light of the prevailing political instability in Libya. Tunisian exports had declined by 22.5% during January and February, 2011, compared to the same period in 2010. Most export sectors, excepting foodstuffs, to Libya would be impacted on in the near future. These sectors, including electrical and mechanical goods, form about 75% of total Tunisian exports. Medicines and foodstuffs became the mainstay of exports to

⁵⁴⁰al-Homami, *The Reality of the Libyan Economy and the Future Plan*. Official Report, op cit, p.2.

⁵⁴¹Ibid. p.1.

neighbouring Libya during this period.⁵⁴² Despite the disruption, generated by the conflict in Libya, to the volume of economic exchange, common ground exists between post-Ben Ali regime Tunisia and a post-Gaddafi Libya. The fledgling democratic regime in Tunisia supported the revolution against Gaddafi which saw the end of his reign. A high level of political goodwill has thus been created between the two countries. Favourable conditions are present for the continuing expansion of the cross-border trade in a region where political stability has not yet been achieved. In 2012, the Libyan Interim Government and the Tunisian Government agreed a Memorandum of Understanding on the economic co-operation between the two parties. Article One of the Memorandum demonstrated the political will of the two nations to increase the volume of commercial activities between them. The private sector is to receive support in order to play a key part in economic development.⁵⁴³

Project for Joint Customs Arrangements

I examined earlier the factors pushing up the volume of cross-border trade between Tunisia and Libya, and the various sectors benefitting from this increase. International sanctions on Libya between 1992 and 2004 had forced many Libyans to turn to Tunisia to ease the economic conditions of their country. Heavy Libyan reliance on Tunisian ports for the movement of goods and people, was apparent. In this period, Tunisia and Libya focused on formalising the increasing volume of trade relations through the creation of institutions and the signing of agreements. Simpler rules regulating and easing the cross-border traffic were pursued by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. Exemptions were introduced from the required financial guarantees for goods entering the Tunisian seaport of Zarzis and the Djerba International Airport on their way to Libya.⁵⁴⁴ Transport trucks also received exemptions from customs duties once they crossed the Libyan-Tunisian borders.⁵⁴⁵

Feasibility studies were conducted by Tunisia and Libya on the impact of a customs post on their borders. As a result, an agreement was made in 2000 to establish the post, and Ras Ajdir

⁵⁴²Ibid. p.2.

⁵⁴³ The Libyan and Tunisian Governments, *'Memorandum of Understanding of Economic Co-operation between the Libyan Interim Government and the Tunisian Government'*. (Tunisia ,2012).

⁵⁴⁴ The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, *'Minutes of the 11th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'*, (Tunis, Tunisia, 1998).

⁵⁴⁵Ibid.

was chosen as the location for its construction.⁵⁴⁶ Both countries were to contribute half of the total cost for the project, which was estimated at 11 million Libyan Dinars.⁵⁴⁷ Elaboration of the organisational and practical aspects of the post was made in a separate protocol in Tripoli in February, 2003.⁵⁴⁸ Easier movement of goods between Tunisia and Libya was the stated goal for this joint project, thanks to less time and effort being wasted without the double burden of conforming to two separate national regulations. A joint committee of experts was formed to supervise the implementation process of this Agreement.⁵⁴⁹ However, an obvious delay in the construction of the project was highlighted in official documents. Libya was blamed for this setback by the Libyan-Tunisian expert committee. Although it was projected that the project would be completed by the end of 2003, Libya did not implement its commitments according to the Agreement. Allocation of the funds for the project was the source of the delay. In contrast, Tunisia fulfilled about 90% of its obligations towards the joint customs ports by April, 2005.⁵⁵⁰

Political will within the Libyan regime appeared to be lacking in taking forward an important step towards economic integration. Authoritarian practices in Libya could have taken the necessary steps to complete the project. Further, I think that the end of the international embargo on Libya in 2004 was also a primary factor which lessened the enthusiasm of the Gaddafi regime in regard to the Ras Ajdir customs post. Libya was now able to import and export directly from other countries, without going through Tunisian middlemen. In the Tunisian case, the Ben Ali regime, perhaps no less authoritarian, was consistent in its efforts to create a customs post. Tunisia had a more sustained experience than Libya of the creation of a national infrastructure, demonstrated by its tourism industry, which allowed it to be more enthusiastic about investing money and resources into developing the capacity of its cross-border trade with Libya. The Gaddafi regime systematically eroded Libya's national infrastructure in an economy that was largely dependent on oil revenues. No previous

⁵⁴⁶Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁴⁷The General People's Committee (the Libyan Cabinet), 'A Report on Joint Customs Ports', in Customs Department (ed.), (Tripoli, 2004).

⁵⁴⁸The Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Agreement for Custom Ports between Libya and Tunisia', Government Agreement. (Tripoli, 2006).

⁵⁴⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁵⁰ The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Meeting of the Libyan-Tunisian Team of Experts About the Customs Port', in Libyan Foreign Ministry (ed.), (Tripoli, 07/05/2005).

experience existed around the investment and maintenance of an infrastructure responding to the demands of local independent business interests, or international capital.

Joint efforts concerning the cross-border trade have nonetheless continued, despite the failure to complete the customs post at Ras Ajdir. Co-operation on the exemption from customs duties of transported goods has been in force since February, 2003. A team of customs experts was formed by Libya to monitor and facilitate the movement of goods across the border. This helped the movement of products and people in both directions.⁵⁵¹ Customs authorities had also co-operated on the matter of legislation regulating custom duties. This matter received the attention of a team of experts, which produced a united directory for custom duties consisting of the movement of people and goods between Libya and Tunisia. Libyan-Tunisian joint co-operation was also present in the training of customs staff, business studies, information exchange, and the confronting of drugs and smuggling.⁵⁵²

Joint Investments

Investments in joint projects in Tunisia and Libya were encouraged by the remarkable increase in the volume of cross-border economic trade that was mentioned earlier. Many wealthy Libyan investors turned their attention to the various financial opportunities in neighbouring Tunisia in order to increase their capital investments in its economy. Other factors also contributed to the economic co-operation in this area. Political stability and an investment-friendly environment in Tunisia encouraged Libyan businessmen to view it as a promising financial opportunity. An economic agreement between Tunisia and Libya was agreed in 2005. These factors helped to increase the volume of private investments.⁵⁵³ Similar moves to promote joint investment in Libya and Tunisia also took place.

Educational and technical workshops for Libyan and Tunisian businessmen on the means and benefits of investment took place. Tripoli hosted one of these workshops, in February, 2002, which focused on the prospects for investment in the two countries' food industry. A similar

⁵⁵¹The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the Half-Year Meeting of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.', (Tunis, Tunisia, 2003).

⁵⁵²The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the Libyan-Tunisian Committee on Economics and Finance', (Tripoli, Libya, 2006). See also, Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁵³The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 18th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (Tripoli: 2005b).

workshop was held in mid-2002, on potential investments in textile, timber, furniture, tourism, farming, and other industries. These workshops attracted a number of Libyan and Tunisian businessmen who were interested in the prospects for investment in the two countries.⁵⁵⁴

Further sessions, alternating between the two countries, were recommended by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee to supplement the activities of these workshops. The promotion of legal and financial frameworks among investors was to be the intended goal.⁵⁵⁵ The Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry also played an important role in advocating economic investments in Tunisia and Libya. Cities in both countries hosted, under the Joint Chambers, several activities for investors during 2006 and 2007. The contributions made by the Libyan Chamber of Commerce to these joint efforts persuaded the Libyan government to pass legal regulations on investment. Investment Law No. 5⁵⁵⁶ gave Tunisian investors a set of rights to encourage them to invest in Libya. A reduction in the minimum investment of capital, from one million Libyan Dinars to half a million, was accompanied by a tax exemption of 8 years.⁵⁵⁷ Less burdensome rules allowed Tunisian investment in the Libyan economy through attractive incentives that aimed to stimulate greater capital flows into the country as well as economic growth.

Commercial exhibitions were organised in Libya and Tunisia that sought to exchange information and experience of investments. Many companies from different sectors participated. In the annual exhibition held in Tripoli, about 65 Tunisian companies, including industrial, agriculture, tourism and services, have a permanent exhibition stand. Such events allow businessmen from both countries to develop and sustain trading contacts. The prospects for economic co-operation and investment can be explored. Full partnership between individuals, and deeper integration between economies, are interlinked objectives. Africa is a potential area for new investments of private capital from Tunisia and Libya. Many African countries not only need such investments, but also have huge investment prospects, especially in the service sectors.⁵⁵⁸ Increased co-operation in the Maghreb can open doors to the push

⁵⁵⁴Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ General People's Congress, ' Foreign Investments Law in Libya ', (1997). article 7, p.10.

⁵⁵⁷Committee, 'Minutes of the 17th Session of Meetings of Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁵⁸The General People's Committee for Economy And Trade, 'Report on the Tunisian Day at Tripoli International Fair ', The General Board Of Fairs (ed.), Official Report. (Tripoli, Libya: 2005).

for business opportunities further south in the African continent. The requirements for development can be satisfied by joint policies on investment which deepen economic integration between Libya and Tunisia and create new export markets in other countries.

The Libyan Investment Authority⁵⁵⁹ and the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency⁵⁶⁰ organised Libyan investment in Tunisia. Exploring and directing the prospects for investment was complemented by the development of regulations on investment. Further, the generation of information and expertise was also a necessary part of supporting the activities of investors in the two nations. Particular attention to small-sized businesses aimed to provide them with the opportunities to flourish and participate in a struggle for economic growth.⁵⁶¹ A joint team of investment experts was formed to co-ordinate the views of Libyan and Tunisian official investment bodies concerning the regulations and incentives present in their countries. Identifying potential projects, such as rebuilding and operating factories, farming and fishing, fell within the scope of its activities.⁵⁶²

An effort by Libyan and Tunisian investment authorities, co-ordinated with businessmen from both countries, produced a detailed agreement in February, 2003, to pursue investment programmes.⁵⁶³ Two directions can be observed in this agreement. Libyan investment in Tunisia made a huge leap during the first decade of the 21st century, making up about 44% of the country's capital investment in the Arab world, which is estimated at 5 billion Dollars.⁵⁶⁴ In 2008, Libyan capital investments in the Tunisian economy were about \$1 billion.⁵⁶⁵ Investments between Libya and Tunisia were motivated by a variety of factors. Economic liberalisation in Tunisia, in response to global financial crises, was mimicked by the Libyan

⁵⁵⁹ The Libyan Investment Authority was established in 2006 to run Libyan foreign investments that resulted from reserves in oil revenues and other Libyan assets. This authority includes the assets of the Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company, the Libyan African Investment Portfolio and Oil Investment Company. Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute, 'Libyan Investment Authority ', <<http://www.swfinstitute.org/swfs/libyan-investment-authority/>>, accessed 14/04/ 2014.

⁵⁶⁰The Foreign Investment Promotion Agency 'FIPA-Tunisia is a public institution set up in 1995 under the supervision of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. See The Foreign Investment Promotion Agency.' Information ', <http://www.investintunisia.tn/site/en/article.php?id_article=820>, accessed 12/01/ 2013.

⁵⁶¹Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. 'op cit.

⁵⁶²Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁶³Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'The Libyan Investments in Tunisia', Official Report. Department of Foreign Co-operation (ed.), (Tripoli, Libya, 2011). p.6.

⁵⁶⁵The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 20th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' (Tripoli, 2007).

regimes. Foreign direct investment was the major source of growth for the Tunisian economy. When European capital investments declined, from mid-2002, Libya filled in the shortfall.⁵⁶⁶ Libya thus emerged as Tunisia's part-economic partner. Investments and economic agreements were concluded in an attempt to revive the weak economy in neighbouring Tunisia. Industrial and tourist projects received the attention of Libyan investors. The Libyan-African Investment Fund bought several five stars hotels and acquired the Tunisian oil company Exxon Mobil.⁵⁶⁷

Particular emphasis on tourism in Tunisia attracted 1.5 billion Libyan Dinars to fund over 33 projects. High profits, worth 20% of total tourist investments, were generated.⁵⁶⁸ Further, Libya invested in 20 chemical factories and 20 building supplies factories. More investments were made in 3 textile factories, 17 factories for foodstuffs, 4 metal industry and 4 engineering projects.⁵⁶⁹ Since 2002, agricultural projects have caught the notice of Libyan investment, in the form of 6 farming initiatives, along with a few pharmaceutical factories and 9 other projects.⁵⁷⁰ Libya's, narrowly oil-based, vast economic wealth has allowed it to diversify into a financial portfolio covering different economic sectors in Tunisia. Interdependency was driven by finding profitable outlets for the continuous revenue from oil, which would expand the Libyan regime's influence through foreign direct investment in Tunisia and other countries. Promotion of private sector investments between Tunisia and Libya was a key aspect of future economic integration. The privatisation of public sector companies took place in Tunisia with private investors having been invited to buy and run these companies. Similarly, Libya permitted joint Libyan-Tunisian private companies to establish foodstuffs and building supplies factories.⁵⁷¹

State-backed efforts to bring private enterprise into formerly government-run sectors were underpinned by the neo-liberal philosophy that was increasingly being adopted by Arab elites, not just in the Maghreb but throughout the Arab world. Reducing the role of the state,

⁵⁶⁶The Tunisian Investment Agency, 'The Foreign Investments in Tunisia', Official Report. (Tunis, Tunisia: 2008). p.22.

⁵⁶⁷The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 22nd Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' (Tripoli, 2009).

⁵⁶⁸ International Co-operation Department, 'The Libyan Investments in Tunisia'. Official Report. (The Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tripoli, 2012). p.9.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. p.12.

⁵⁷⁰Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' Op cit.

⁵⁷¹ Committee, 'Minutes of the 18th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' Op cit.

through subsidies or health provisions, was a necessary stage in the development of the economy. International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank experts advised Arab elites, mainly unelected rulers, to implement a policy of economic liberalisation, which would remove subsidies while not pursuing the issue of political reform. The primary philosophy of economic liberalisation is to deliver the services or goods from the reputedly inefficient public sector to the dynamic and better prepared private sector.⁵⁷² While Libya's oil revenues had shielded it from turning to the IMF, in order not to concede any control to external actors in the decision-making process of the country,⁵⁷³ it implemented a selective strategy of privatisation.

Discussions within the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, on the Tunisian proposal to privatise some public projects, would benefit Libyan private investors.⁵⁷⁴ Among the privatised projects were the Tawfiq Health Centre, the Sfax Furniture Company, the Desert Plus Company, and the Shore Mechanical Factories. Bilateral discussions about these projects showed that the Libyan side had already carried out cost-benefit studies into the profitability of these projects.⁵⁷⁵ Interestingly, Libyan investors appear to have been reluctant to participate in the privatisation process. Past negative experience of the Libyan private sector, involving the Libyan regime and its tight control of the economy, could explain this reluctance.⁵⁷⁶ As a result, the demand for joint Libyan-Tunisian acquisition of proposed projects was made. More extensive studies into proposed projects needed to be carried out in order to supply Libyan investors with the information about the economic advantages of them. A few Libyan investments had been made with no profitable returns, but the Libyan regime prized their political value in the fostering of long-term bilateral relations. A restructuring of the labour force for the proposed project was a prerequisite before starting the talks on privatisation.⁵⁷⁷ The aforementioned demands were driven by Libyan regime's destructive effects on private enterprise in the past, and the need to safeguard potential investments. However, the experience of their Tunisian counterparts was different. Frequent

⁵⁷² M. A. Mohamed Saleh, *Economic Development and Political Action in the Arab World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p.16.

⁵⁷³ Michael Field, *Inside the Arab World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), p.202.

⁵⁷⁴ Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' Op cit.

⁵⁷⁵ Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁵⁷⁶ Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

interaction and joint activities between Tunisian private capital and foreign companies is rooted in recent history.

The policy of Libyan-Tunisian joint involvement in private sector investments was largely due to Tunisian plans to introduce economic reforms in Tunisia. Privatisation of a few public sector organisations and companies that were perceived to be a burden on the public purse, was a major aim for the Ben Ali regime. Financial and administrative difficulties did plague these companies. Local and foreign investors also influenced the government-led efforts to push forward economic liberation for their benefit. The 'Tunisian model' persuaded the Libyan regime to follow its neighbour's footsteps, thereby permitting Libyan private investors to contribute in shaping economic relations with Tunisia. A marked change took place at the beginning of the 21st century on the issue of economic liberalisation in Libya. Two aspects of this phenomenon can be observed. Firstly, the reformist views expressed by Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of Muammar Gaddafi, who proposed a larger role for the Libyan private sector in the process of economic growth. The apparent liberalising tendencies of Saif Al-Islam were perceived by his critics as merely part of a wider public relations campaign to prepare him to succeed his father in power. Secondly, increasing discontent generated from economic policies in Libya was subject to the Libyan regime's strategy of containment. A deterioration in the quality of life among Libyans was a cause for concern in the decision-makers. Encouragement of private investors to participate in the economy was a solution pursued by the regime to create a sense of having a stake in the *status quo*.

Africa's rising economic importance was recognised by Libya and Tunisia in their joint relations in the areas of investment and export markets. A consistent effort was made to create connections with regional and global economic networks, especially on the African continent.⁵⁷⁸ New markets were to be found in which nationally-produced goods could be sold. The Libyan-African Investment Company and the Tunisian Group of Studies and Engineering jointly took charge of economic investments in the African continent.⁵⁷⁹ Most of

⁵⁷⁸Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁵⁷⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

the joint investments were in the foodstuff and beverage industries. Detailed studies were made to explore the investment prospects in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Guinea.⁵⁸⁰

Investment, for Tunisia, was viewed as a tool for the marketing of its products and services in African countries, with medical tourism being an important example. However, Libyan motivations differed from those of its border nation. Economic investments in Africa were based on a definite political agenda whereby the Libyan regime wanted to reward African countries for support during the diplomatic controversy generated by the Lockerbie disaster. Foreign policy coincided with an economic agenda revolving around Libya's strategic role in Africa. Oil and financial investments were tools in its economic activities. Private enterprise was encouraged to look for, and explore, African investment opportunities. The creation of the presence of an economic lobby in African countries which received Libyan investment was part of Libyan foreign policy. The flow of private capital from Libya into Africa was not only urged by the Libyan regime, who was seeking to widen the scope of its country's foreign direct investment, but was also political. Pan-Arabism had failed to obtain for Gaddafi his ideological goal of uniting the Arabs under a single state. Instead, greater collaboration with African countries could empower him on the world stage through a political and economic alliance with loosely organised sovereign states. Gaddafi's personal participation in forming the African Union is a clear example of the shift from the Arab world to Africa. The authoritarian nature of his regime allowed him to focus Libyan efforts on economic integration with Tunisia and other African nations, instead of on Arab states.

Conclusion

Official documents from state archives were analysed in this chapter in order to identify the trend towards economic integration between Tunisia and Libya from 1987 until 2010. Several changes had taken place which provided a suitable environment for Tunisia's new President, Ben Ali, to improve previously hostile ties between his country and Libya, after he took to power. Top-down changes were introduced by authoritarian regimes. The leaders of Libya and Tunisia still exerted tight control over their countries, with no political dissent being allowed and a pace of economic liberalisation according to a specific agenda: the survival of the regime. Ben Ali and Gaddafi co-operated in various areas, including the formation of the

⁵⁸⁰Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

Arab Maghreb Union and membership in the African Union. These two regional organisations enabled the two leaders to pursue their economic and political objectives in a wider sphere. In the Maghreb, Gaddafi found Ben Ali to be a willing partner in opposition to the American-led coalition against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that led to the First Gulf War. The 1991 Maghreb Payment Agreement, signed by Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia, sought to strengthen financial co-ordination on a region-wide basis. The African continent was the location for joint investment initiatives between Tunisia and Libya, through the United Libyan-Tunisian Corporation, seeking new markets for state-financed or private capital. Both countries pursued co-ordinated policies that were underpinned by different objectives. Libya's foreign policy appears to have abandoned its goal of political union with its Arab sister-states. It instead focused on strengthening ties with African countries, as a reward for their diplomatic and political support during the Western-imposed isolation of the country. Tunisian foreign direct investment in Africa was seen to be a marketing campaign to promote its goods and services, such as medical tourism.

International sanctions also led to an increase in the level of trade between Libya and Tunisia. Libyans were forced to use airports in Tunisia in order to travel, and imported products had to pass through the country before arriving in Libya. Laws aimed at encouraging bilateral relations were passed, and joint committees were established exclusively for the purpose of co-ordinating these relations from the early 1990s. Customs duty exemptions for Tunisian and Libyan goods were introduced. The formalisation of the cross-border trade implied greater attention from the regimes in Tripoli and Tunis on an important matter binding their countries together. During Ben Ali's rule, Libya was elevated to the position of Tunisia's primary Arab trading partner. The volume of bilateral economic exchange rose from 1.5 billion Libyan Dinars in 2006, to 3 billion Dinars in 2009. This is evidence of the increasing interdependence of relations between Tunisia and Libya.

However, there were limits to the joint policy of economic co-operation in cross-border trade. Formalisation of these relations did not always lead to economic integration. The unsuccessful project of constructing a customs post in Ras Ajdir following feasibility tests indicates the weaknesses of bilateral relations between different regimes and national infrastructures. Libya was unable or unwilling to fulfil its part of the agreement. I think this was mainly due to the lack of experience in creating and sustaining an infrastructure in Libya during Gaddafi's reign. No pressure was exerted on the Libyan regime to respond to the demands of a non-existent private sector, or of international capital, for an adequate national

infrastructure that was capable of fostering economic growth. Libya's dependency on oil had effectively allowed Gaddafi to concentrate power within restricted and unaccountable elite. Authoritarian politics in Tunisia was different, as its diversified economy was tied to international capital through the visits of foreign tourists. Political stability was achieved through the stifling of opposition or dissent, for the purpose of economic growth in the country.

CHAPTER EIGHT: JOINT LIBYAN-TUNISIAN POLICIES IN THE THREE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

Introduction

This chapter continues the examination of bilateral relations from the previous chapter, with a special focus on specific projects of joint policies through an analysis of official documents and agreements. Extensive efforts to initiate co-operation in various areas of the economy were carried out by committees founded solely for the purpose of bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya. Politics was instrumental in leading the process of integration between their economies. There was a realisation of the mutual benefits to Tunisia and Libya, which led to a change of behaviour in the political elites of both countries. In Tunisia, the new Ben Ali regime had, as I noted in previous chapters, sought better relations with the Gaddafi regime, which also pursued a less antagonistic policy towards its neighbours that was motivated by Arabism or socialism. Instead, the large space for changes in an authoritarian regime, such as the one in Tripoli, allowed Gaddafi to radically change his country's foreign policy agenda. The decision-making process was largely immune from bottom-up pressures.

I will divide my discussion of the official documents analysed in this chapter into three parts, which are also subdivided into sections. The first part examines co-operation in the primary sector of the economy, defined by the agriculture and natural resources. Developing countries like Libya and Tunisia have been dependent on farming, or the extraction of oil and natural gas, to provide a national income. The second part looks at the secondary sector, which saw the implementation of joint industrial projects between Tunisia and Libya. Attracting investment from Tunisian private capital to develop Libya's manufacturing base was one attempt to boost co-operation in this sector. The third part examines the service sector of the economy, which is interlinked with the sectors to be analysed in the other sections. Tourism, health, transport, education and power supply, were all areas that witnessed initiatives at co-operation through the formalising of the bilateral relations. Joint policies in all three sectors of the economy were driven by authoritarian elites. The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee played an important role in recommending policies, undertaking studies into the feasibility of projects and other activities. The primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the Tunisian and Libyan economies were dissimilar, and they required a complex strategy that

was underpinned by the effective exercise of power, not only by regimes, but also other actors, such as the private sector and international capital.

Primary Sector

Joint Policies in Agriculture and Fishing

Agriculture and fishing witnessed co-operation between Tunisia and Libya that was underpinned by the complementing of functions. Tunisian experience and Libyan capital were brought together in these fields. Agreements were made to cultivate land and exploit fishing stocks. The Libyan and Tunisian regimes were interested in achieving self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs, such as livestock and meat, in order not to be dependent on other countries. Co-operation was carried out by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. Formalisation was accompanied by the formation of scientific teams that were charged with the planning and implementation of collaborative projects. These projects varied from water supplies to agriculture to fishing. Studies on the Ghadamis Aquifer, located on the border between Algeria, Libya and Tunisia, began in 1999 and were backed by the three governments in the region.⁵⁸¹ Discussions revolved around the possibility of developing the aquifer in order to create a water supply to the immediate, surrounding water-poor area.⁵⁸² Joint participation by Algeria, Libya and Tunisia took place in the scientific, ecological and social studies, focusing on the potential effects of developing the aquifer.⁵⁸³ Complete implementation of the project did not occur. There were two obstacles that stood in the way of the realisation of this trilateral initiative: the high costs of the project -- leading to stakeholders not fulfilling their financial commitments after 2009; and Algeria's reluctance to take part.⁵⁸⁴

The al-Wa'rah⁵⁸⁵ Pasture was to be the home of a development project jointly run by Libya and Tunisia. Preservation of the natural environment in a territory shared by the two nations

⁵⁸¹ The Ghadamis Aquifer, also known as the North Desert Aquifer, is a huge underwater basin. It is near the Libyan city of Ghadamis, which is close to the joint borders of the three countries.

⁵⁸²Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁸³Committee, 'Minutes of the 20th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. .opcit.

⁵⁸⁴The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 21st Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' (Tripoli, 2008).

⁵⁸⁵This is a natural reserve area, located on the joint Libyan-Tunisian borders. It is mainly owned by some Tunisian tribes who live in the area.

drove this project. A joint team of experts was established to undertake studies into the proposed project in al-Wa'rah Pasture.⁵⁸⁶ Recommendations suggested that each country should implement the requirements for development inside its own borders. Further meetings on the project were also recommended.⁵⁸⁷ Concerns were highlighted by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee about the financial costs of the project. A full report into the proposal for the development project was to be carried out and submitted to the recently formed New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).⁵⁸⁸ This move on the part of committee aimed to gain much needed funding from an African development-oriented regional organisation.⁵⁸⁹ However, the proposal for funds was rejected. As a result, its implementation suffered delays, in light of the lack of financial support. Different sources were to be looked for in the attempt to establish the joint development project. The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee revisited the project and recommended the raising of money through other channels, such as international funds.⁵⁹⁰

In the field of agriculture, several teams of specialists were established to increase the level of co-operation in pest control and to facilitate an exchange of knowledge. A joint workshop was held in 1998 to evaluate the recently initiated Libyan and Tunisian activities concerning the protection of plant life. Rules, and the prospects of upgrading and integrating these rules, were subject to a review. Additional efforts in this area saw Tunisia and Libya carry out scientific studies into how to effectively tackle plant diseases.⁵⁹¹ Knowledge exchange also took place on the state of marine and animal life.⁵⁹² Earlier proposals that had been agreed

⁵⁸⁶Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. .op cit.

⁵⁸⁷Committee, 'Minutes of the 21st Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'.. op cit.

⁵⁸⁸ The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was established on 23/10/2001 in the Nigerian capital. This initiative aimed to support African countries' developmental pursuits in all aspects. Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa were the main countries that initiated NEPAD. These countries formulated a set of economic and social measures to help rebuild the African continent, and to rid it of backwardness. The plans for the initiative also focused on promoting joint financial investments across Africa. Additionally, the initiative called for poverty, illness and other socio-economic problems on the continent to be challenged. However, due to the difficult conditions, the initiative became a global, rather than an African one, in the sense that it started to rely on international financial support. For instance, the Great Industrial Countries, (the G8) adopted NEPAD. The declared aim is to help Africa ease its poverty and to promote developmental plans on the continent.

⁵⁸⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 18th Session of Meetings of Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. .op cit.

⁵⁹⁰Committee, 'Minutes of the 22nd Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹¹Committee, 'Minutes of the 19th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. .op cit.

⁵⁹²Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

were the focus of implementation of Libyan and Tunisian efforts in the fishing industry. Regular meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee over 20 years led to several decisions inviting interested parties to increase investments in this area.⁵⁹³ An agreement was concluded on the breeding of tuna fish.⁵⁹⁴ Joint efforts were limited to the creation of sub-committees, which were to study the prospects of a shared marine zone between Tunisia and Libya, and to define fishing regulations.⁵⁹⁵

General co-operation occurred in the areas of environmental protection, plant and seed breeding, and the regulation of water salinity.⁵⁹⁶ The formation of the Libyan-Tunisian Company for Agricultural Equipment, in 1993, aimed to foster bilateral co-operation in developing and providing seeds and equipment. It stood at the heart of the increasing co-operation and investment in the agricultural sector.⁵⁹⁷ The financial capital of the company was increased by the Libyan and Tunisian regimes for the purpose of implementing a joint plan for agricultural development and production.⁵⁹⁸ A detailed policy on the expansion of plant, marine and animal production was deliberated over by a joint team of specialists. Private investors were invited to participate in the marketing of agricultural products in Tunisia, Libya, and other countries.⁵⁹⁹

The Committee was interested in developing a strategy of long-term bilateral agricultural co-operation. Potential investors were urged by this organisation to have a simple administrative and technical system to aid the marketing of products inside and outside Libya and Tunisia.⁶⁰⁰ An agreement on agricultural development was reached by the Libyan Investment Agency and the Tunisian Agricultural Promotion Agency. Private investors were encouraged to be involved in agribusiness in Tunisia and Libya.⁶⁰¹ Specialist teams were formed by the

⁵⁹³ Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹⁴ Committee, 'Minutes of the 18th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹⁵ Committee, 'Minutes of the 21st Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹⁶ Committee, 'Minutes of the 21st Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹⁷ Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹⁸ Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁵⁹⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰⁰ Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁰¹ *ibid.*

Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee to examine the prospects of utilising water resources from 'the Great River', which is located in Libya. It also invited investors from Tunisia to set up agricultural projects in Libya for the purpose of strengthening the process of bilateral integration.⁶⁰²

Generally, the existence of joint Libyan-Tunisian specialised committees contributed to a level of co-ordination not previously present between Libyan and Tunisian officials. However, the effects of the bilateral agreements signed on agricultural co-operation remained limited.⁶⁰³ Both private and public sector companies were unable to fulfil the administrative, legal and financial commitments that were stipulated by these agreements. The Libyan-Tunisian Company for Seeds and Agricultural Equipment suffered from this problem, which subsequently led to its dissolution in 2008.⁶⁰⁴ Interestingly, this company was founded during Libyan political and economic isolation from the world, and it served the function of providing desperately needed agricultural equipment, which was also used in the UN-targeted oil industry. The committees and sub-committees which emerged after 1987 were given the task of looking at various ways to create and sustain bilateral relations. However, their functions appear to have been generally advisory, with real power still located in the Gaddafi and Ben Ali regimes. The interests of these regimes defined the direction and scope of economic co-operation in agriculture and fishing and in other areas of the economy. The formalisation of joint economic ties thus served political objectives, rather than the financial considerations of independent investors in agribusiness.

Integration Projects for Oil and Gas

Territorial disputes over the continental shelf have plagued Tunisian and Libyan relations. During the period of Bourguiba's rule, tensions were generated about which countries own the continental shelf, thereby hindering the growth of joint ties for nearly 20 years. Arab League efforts to mediate an amicable agreement between Bourguiba and Gaddafi concerning the territory, failed. The dispute was subsequently referred to the International

⁶⁰²ibid.

⁶⁰³Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit

⁶⁰⁴Committee, 'Minutes of the 21st Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

Court of Justice, which settled the question of ownership in favour of Libya in 1985.⁶⁰⁵ However, economic co-operation would have to wait until 1987, when Bourguiba was ousted, which was complemented by a complete change in the mood of Libyan-Tunisian ties, with both states recognising the decision of the International Court of Justice.⁶⁰⁶ Better relations were due to the actions of the new Ben Ali regime in various areas, especially the continental shelf, which were welcomed by Libya. Consequently, Gaddafi renamed the oil field, changing its name from the 'Bouri Field' to the '7th November', in honour of Ben Ali's successful coup d'état against Bourguiba in 1987. Moves towards a thaw in relations were reinforced by Libya agreeing to carry out joint investments with Tunisia. Libya pledged to allocate 10% of its oil revenues from the continental shelf to the financing of a number of collaborative economic projects on the border.⁶⁰⁷ The agreement between Gaddafi and Ben Ali in Djerba in May, 1988, was publicised through a joint press statement from both leaders, highlighting the projects to be implemented. These projects were part of a broader policy which would include efforts in this area by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.⁶⁰⁸ The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, at its 1993 meetings, formed a sub-committee to follow up on the joint border economic projects.⁶⁰⁹ In a further session, this Committee also identified some of the aspects of co-operation on the issue of oil and gas production.

Libyan and Tunisian co-operation in exploitation of natural resources was led by the initiative of the former. Oil discoveries and sharing were to be conducted by a specialised company based in both countries, called the Oil Joint Company.⁶¹⁰ Work on the 7th November Oil

⁶⁰⁵Mohamed al-Sayed, 'Network of Relationships in the Maghreb Region', the Arab Strategic Report. Mohamed Al-Sayed(ed) (Cairo: Al-ahram Center 1985).

⁶⁰⁶Libyan-Tunisian Governments, 'Libyan-Tunisian Agreement for Application of the Rule of the International Tribunal Concerning the Continental Shelf', in The Libyan Foreign Ministry Arab Administration (ed.),Governmental Agreement. (Benghazi/Libya: 1988).

⁶⁰⁷ This was part of a joint agreement in Benghazi in 1988. The agreement stated the willingness of Libya to allocate some of the revenues from oil and gas from the marine fields to being invested in joint integration projects on the Libyan-Tunisian borders. For more details, see Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Agreement for Allocating part of the Revenues from Oil and Gas Production from the Continental Shelf', in Libyan Foreign Ministry (ed.), Governmental Agreement. (Benghazi, 1988). Article 1.

⁶⁰⁸Ibid. Article 2

⁶⁰⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶¹⁰ This company was established in 1988 on the basis of equal shares for Libya and Tunisia. Its activity focused on discovering and producing crude oil on their joint marine borders. The agreement that governed the company was amended on 27/8/2008 to include activities for oil discovery in the land territories. For more, see Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Agreement on the Establishment of the Oil Shared Company', in Libyan Foreign Ministry (ed.),Governmental Agreement,(Tripoli,1988). See also, Libyan and Tunisian Governments,

Field led to the opening of the first oil well in 2000.⁶¹¹ At the beginning of 2001, the drilling of two more wells followed.⁶¹² More legal rights were granted to expand the scope of the activities of the oil company in the areas of the discovery and production of crude oil on an individual or collaborative basis with other companies.⁶¹³ Modifications were also made to the company's agreement, allowing it to work not only in Libya and Tunisia, but also in other countries.⁶¹⁴ Tax on oil revenues and customs duties on imported work equipment were exempted.⁶¹⁵ These modifications allowed the Oil Joint Company to participate in new areas and without the extra cost imposed by state regulations. A number of incentives were thus put in place in the oil industry to encourage joint Libyan-Tunisian co-operation. Libyan exports of oil products experienced an increase in this period. A pipeline to transfer oil products from Libya to Tunisia was part of a wider co-operation in the oil industry.⁶¹⁶ There were bilateral examinations of the construction of an oil refinery in the Skhira area of Tunisia. A project was also initiated to increase the storage capacity for the refined oil products in the same area. In March, 2003, an agreement was made on the building of two oil pipelines, with the first running from Zawya, in Libya, to Skhira, and the second to transfer crude oil to the refinery in the latter area.⁶¹⁷

Natural gas from Libya to Tunisia also received attention from both regimes. The generation of power and energy supplies provided both countries with an opportunity to work towards integration. A team of experts was appointed to plan and quickly implement a project on the construction of gas pipelines in this sector of the economy. Although an agreement was concluded in the early 1980s, the setting up of a decision-making procedure for the implementation of this project began only in 2001. This agreement provided the legal outline organising the flow of Libyan gas to Tunisia.⁶¹⁸ Practical steps to realising the agreement were undertaken by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. Potential funding

'Modification of the Agreement of the Oil Shared Company between Libya and Tunisia', in Libyan Foreign Ministry (ed.), Governmental Agreement. (Tripoli, 27/08/2008).

⁶¹¹Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit,

⁶¹²Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶¹³Governments, 'Modification of the Agreement of the Oil Shared Company between Libya and Tunisia'. op cit.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Agreement for Supplying Tunisia with Oil and Gas ', Libyan National Oil Enterprise (ed.), Governmental Agreement. (2003).

⁶¹⁷Ibid.

⁶¹⁸Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'Agreement for Providing Tunisia with Libyan Gas', Libyan National Oil Enterprise (ed.), Government Agreement. (Tripoli, 2001).

sources were contacted by the Committee and they provided the technical and economic studies on the proposed joint project. Financial plans for the project were first examined by the Committee in 1993. Subsequently, in 2002, it authorised the Libya Oil Company and the Tunisian Company for Electricity to formulate a joint framework to manage the project on the integration of power.⁶¹⁹ The Joint Gas Company was then established by Libya and Tunisia, with both countries delineating the legal, organisational, financial and technical structures of the company.⁶²⁰ In 2004, the company was officially launched.⁶²¹ The first activity of the Joint Gas Company included the building of a pipeline, about 275 KMs. in length, to annually transfer 2 billion cubic meters of Libyan gas to Tunisia.

Major decisions on natural resources were still made by Libya's political elite. The formalisation of the natural resources sector, based on the creation of bilateral ties between Tunisia and Libya, was undertaken through the setting up of agreements, committees and joint companies. However, the private sector was kept out of this area of the economy, which generated a vast amount of national income for the Libyan economy. Interestingly, the relationship between the regime's control of oil and its ability to remain above formal politics can be seen in the titles Gaddafi gave to himself, such as 'Guide of the Revolution' or 'Brother-Leader'. The formal office of President was not part of Libya's political language. The perceived freedom of Gaddafi from the government in its decision-making processes was contradicted by his absolute control of the source of political power: oil.

Secondary Sector

Industrial Joint Policies

Libya and Tunisia do not possess a highly developed industrial sector. Most advanced products in the areas of science and healthcare had to be imported. The two Maghrebi countries nonetheless sought to develop their industrial capacities. While the light manufacturing and construction sectors were established in Tunisia, with exports going to Libya, the Libyan economy exported oil-based goods to its neighbour. Joint co-operation in

⁶¹⁹Ibid.

⁶²⁰ The Joint Gas Company is a Libyan-Tunisian structure of joint capital shares. It was established in 2002 to organise and operate the integrating project, by transferring gas from Mallitah, in the west of Libya, to Quabis, in Tunisia. For more details, see Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'Agreement on the Establishment of the Gas Shared Company', in Libyan Foreign Ministry (ed.), (Tripoli, 2002).

⁶²¹Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

the industrial sector was led by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, the Joint Committee for Industrial Co-operation and other experts keen to promote this goal. The regimes in both countries worked with these official bodies to produce rules to aid Libyan and Tunisian manufacturers. Investors in the industrial sector, from both nations, were invited to participate and co-operate in the manufacturing sector.⁶²²

The Maghreb Joint Stock Company is a Libyan-Tunisian industrial organisation, established in 1988, and it has taken the lead in joint projects. National shares were divided between Libya, having 70%, and Tunisia with 30%. Subsequently, the Libyan share increased to 95% of the company. Several industrial businesses fell under its umbrella. These included the Saif Medicine Company, the Jeel Textile Company, and the Real Estate Investment Company. Contributions to, and the financing of, a number of Tunisian industrial projects have taken place.⁶²³ Prospects for industrial co-operation have been explored by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. Agreements have been signed to encourage and implement joint projects. The Libyan Iron and Steel Company and the Tunisian Steel Company concluded an agreement to work together. Formal Co-operation in the field of chemical fertilisers was also made. Marble extraction, especially from the Mizdah quarries, was subject to a joint agreement in order to meet the Libyan and Tunisian demand for the raw material.⁶²⁴ A twinning agreement was made between the Libyan Bureau of Handicrafts and the Tunisian Bureau of Traditional Crafts in January, 2003. Joint co-operation in the extraction of raw material for traditional handicrafts was the main topic of interest.⁶²⁵

Study of joint co-operation between Tunisia and Libya was part of the wider strategy of formulating policies to encourage industrial co-operation. Information and regulations were needed to drive this bilateral effort. Research into these areas would be very useful to enable national industries to make informed decisions and sustain joint projects. Activities to meet these goals took place, such as a workshop on the exhibition of mechanical and engineering industries, which was hosted in Tunis between 17th and 19th February, 2000.⁶²⁶ Technical

⁶²² The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 19th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' (2006a).

⁶²³ Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'An Abstract on the Tunisian Economy.' Official Report. Tripoli, 2002.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁶²⁶ Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

studies to survey the potential resources available for joint industrial projects were called for by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. Quality standards, technical specifications and certificates for the conformity of manufactured products in Tunisia and Libya, were to be the main focus of the studies.⁶²⁷ Teams of industrial experts were established in order to formulate financial and technical policies for the promotion of co-operation in various industrial sectors.⁶²⁸ The Libyan Iron and Steel Company and the Tunisian Steel Company concluded a co-operation arrangement to increase the capacity of the Misrata Steel Complex in Libya. Self-sufficiency in steel production was the primary aim for both countries.⁶²⁹ A co-ordination of the activities of their technological research centres was also agreed. Modernisation of the national industries of Libya and Tunisia was pursued in terms of quality standards and competitiveness.⁶³⁰ Information gathering and sharing were necessary stages in the plan for actual co-operation in industrial activities.

The knowledge exchange facilitated through industrial workshops and information contributed to the establishment of joint factories in Tunisia and Libya. Previously agreed projects were now in the process of implementation.⁶³¹ The Tunisian public sector and private investors were invited by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee to visit a few sites housing industrial firms in Libya. This visit was aimed at increasing the profile of firms in this sector for the purpose of attracting investment and to encourage participation in their management. The Zawya Footwear Factory, the Tajora Tannery, the Benghazi Textile Company and the al-Marj Blanket Factory were examples of ventures driven by developing bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya.⁶³² Subsequently, a Libyan-Tunisian committee was charged with the task of evaluating potential investments in the Tunisian private sector.⁶³³

Libyan initiatives to bring Tunisian investment were motivated by past and present factors. The public sector, which ran companies nationalised after 1969, was characterised by

⁶²⁷Ibid.

⁶²⁸Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁶²⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁶³⁰Ibid.

⁶³¹ Committee, 'Minutes of the 11th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. Op cit.

⁶³² Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' op cit.

⁶³³ Ibid.

incompetence and corruption. Libya's own private enterprise was banned by Gaddafi for nearly a decade and a half. Capitalism was condemned by the Libyan regime, accompanied by socialist-inspired, system targeted businessmen. Private investors were thus wary of putting money into projects. Gaddafi's ideology, contained in *The Green Book*, had created a political and economic environment that was not favourable to independent or enterprising organisations. The authoritarian character of Gaddafi's rule had effectively shut down most of the alternative associations and activities in Libya. Socialist rhetoric, such as 'Partners Not Workers', had echoed throughout the country. Reliable feasibility studies were not carried out in the establishment of public sector factories. As a result, locally produced goods, expensive and of poor quality, were incapable of competing against imported products of a superior quality. Tunisian businessmen were very aware of the political and economic conditions in Libya, including the obstacles which would be facing their prospective investments. Concerns revolved around the ownership of Libyan factories, which produced goods also manufactured in Tunisia.⁶³⁴ Fears were also raised about the inaccessibility of raw materials from abroad for these factories.

In the course of surveying the documents analysed in this chapter, I have found that no actual steps were taken to implement the agreement on the reselling of these factories to Tunisia. Instead, Tunisia suggested the establishment of new joint industrial projects manufacturing other types of products. New projects were also agreed in the electrical and mechanical industries, such as hydraulic and bus equipment.⁶³⁵ However, these projects were not implemented. Subsequent meetings of the Joint Committees, discussed in this section, do not mention these proposed projects. I think the failure to realise the joint Libyan-Tunisian industrial co-operation stipulated in signed agreements was due to the weaknesses, lack of qualified human resources and advanced technology, of the industrial sector in both nations, and their divergent economic policies. Further, no harmonisation took place between Tunisia and Libya. The absence of the co-ordination of the legal systems, national infrastructures, labour forces and expertise, may have been obstacles to bilateral investment. Efforts to formalise inter-state relations did not bring about institutions or mechanisms which could effectively realise the stated objectives or plans.

⁶³⁴Libyan and Tunisian Government, 'Libyan-Tunisian Employment and Investment Agreement', Ministry Of Industry (ed.),Governmental Agreement.(Tripoli, 2003).

⁶³⁵Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.' op cit.

Tertiary Sector

Joint Policies in Tourism

Tourism in the Maghreb has a great potential for further development, to include a cross-border dimension. Rich and diverse tourist attractions in Tunisia and Libya would generate a national source of income. I highlighted in Chapter 6 some of the challenges which existed to co-operation, with reference to the unpredictability posed by the Gaddafi regime. In this section, I will explore further the impact on the tourism industry of joint policies between Tunisia and Libya. Tunisia has worked towards developing its national tourism since Bourguiba was President. The economy depends on this industry as a source of employment and for an inflow of hard currency. Tourism generates the second largest number of jobs, behind the agricultural sector, and its revenue covers about 56% of the Tunisian trade deficit. The Ben Ali regime has thus paid considerable attention to continuous development of tourism in the country.⁶³⁶

Libya's largely unexploited potential in this sector can be seen in the number of archaeological sites from ancient civilisations, such as the Romans, in the desert and on the coastline. Similar attractions in the Maghreb, such as those in Tunisia and in the Mediterranean, are visited by foreign visitors, thereby generating a long-term and large source of national income. However, the infrastructure, discussed in Chapter 6, to sustain such a service-based industry as tourism lacks supported through little investment. The Libyan regime has neglected the service sector, with most attention being focused on either the primary or secondary sectors of the economy. Private enterprise was banned from participating in Libya, thereby excluding the possibility of an alternative engine for the diversification of the economy, in general, and the growth of tourism, in particular. The Gaddafi regime exerted a tight grip on Libya's economy and tourism through the security services.⁶³⁷ Tourism was perceived to offer a potential threat to the national security of the country from unfriendly foreign intelligence services. Authoritarian structures of power, largely informal, continued to dominate the economy. Gaddafi's network of allies was made up not only of his clan and the tribes, but also the security service establishment, including family members, such as the intelligence chief, Abdullah al-Senoussi, who was his brother-

⁶³⁶The Department of Studies and International Co-operation, 'Tourism in Tunisia', Official Report. The Tunisian Ministry Of Tourism, (Tunis, Tunisia, 2003).

⁶³⁷Planning Department, 'Potentials and Challenges for the Libyan Tourism Sector', Official Report. The Libyan Ministry Of Tourism, (Tripoli, 2012).

in-law, who worked closely to maintain the *status quo*. Any moves in the direction of economic liberalisation were thus quickly pulled back by the risk of political liberalisation.

However, the arrival of Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi in the public arena began to introduce changes to Libyan politics. A new vision was articulated, which he described as 'Tomorrow's Libya'. Saif Al-Islam presented himself as a passionate advocate of economic and political reform in the country. Further, he aimed to transform Libya's image abroad. New policies were introduced for the economy, including the development of the tourism sector. Oil revenues had sharply declined during the years of the UN-imposed sanctions. Domestic challenges, as a result of the ineffective policies of the past, also contributed to the need for modification of the Libyan regime's agenda. In this domestic and international situation, tourism was viewed as an appealing area of economic growth. The regime thus sought to co-operate with Tunisia and to develop its own national industry in tourism.

Libyan contributions to bilateral ties concerning tourism saw a rapid increase in the number of tourists from the country visiting Tunisia, and the number overtook the number of French nationals, who previously made up the largest number of tourists. The Libyan tourists formed about 22% of the total number of tourists who visited the country in 2005. However, the rate of room occupancy by Libyan tourists in Tunisian hotels was about 8.8%. Some observers link this low rate to the tendency for Libyan tourists to rent private flats and houses during their holidays.⁶³⁸ Such a remarkable rise in the number of Libyan visitors motivated the regimes of both countries to begin to co-operate in this area. Senior figures in the government met in order to discuss how to develop and improve the necessary facilities and services for the movement of tourists to both countries. Joint agreements were concluded, aiming to organise and boost activity in this economic sector. The formalising of bilateral relations took place in a top-down manner, with the formation of a joint committee, to follow up co-operation in tourism, and the Libyan-Tunisian Tourist Holding Company.⁶³⁹

Relevant authorities and organisations involved in tourism were urged by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee to follow up these acts through increasing their efforts and plans to promote joint initiatives. An exchange of expertise was also called for, alongside

⁶³⁸The Tunisian Ministry Of Tourism, 'The Libyan-Tunisian Tourism Co-operation', Official Report. The Department of Studies and International Co-operation (ed.), (Tunis, Tunisia, 2007).

⁶³⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

the need to pass laws for the marketing of tourist services in both countries and also abroad.⁶⁴⁰ Subsequently, a joint agreement was reached between Tunisia and Libya. Various aspects of co-operation in the promotion of bilateral tourism were detailed. In the areas of hotel management, training and the construction of facilities, the input of Tunisian experience and expertise in Libya was stipulated.⁶⁴¹ Long-established Tunisian experience and knowledge would greatly benefit Libya in this field. There were obvious mutual benefits to their economies from joint Libyan-Tunisian efforts in tourism. The process of the diversification of the Libyan economy required Tunisian expertise in the services catering for the needs of tourists.

Investment in tourism also received the notice of the Libyan authorities. The development of an environment in Tunisia and Libya that was conducive for investment was agreed on. Mutual visits by officials and experts were intensified, complemented by workshops and shows displaying tourist services and traditional handicrafts.⁶⁴² Events such as the 'Libyan-Tunisian Tourist Week' during February, 2002, were held regularly. Opportunities were created to promote joint activities in tourism between Tunisia and Libya. Several exhibitions were held for hotel services, local fine arts, handicrafts, archaeological attractions, festivals and tourist facilities, in both countries. Twinning proposals between organisations were approved, similarly to the case of the High Institute of Tourism in Misrata, Libya, and its Tunisian counterpart in Sidi Zarif, in order that the former should provide staff training in the various areas of tourism.⁶⁴³

A cross-border initiative was studied by Libya and Tunisia, exploring the success of a 'tourist town'.⁶⁴⁴ The generation of employment in an area containing communities afflicted by poverty, was an objective of the decision-makers in the proposal of the project. The construction of a national infrastructure, in Libya's case, and the extension of an existing one, in Tunisia's case, would be able to address the socio-economic problems that were located on their borders. Careful planning and effective implementation can serve the goal of alleviating

⁶⁴⁰Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁴¹The Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'Agreement on Libyan-Tunisian Tourist Co-operation', Governmental Agreement. (Tunis, Tunisia).

⁶⁴²Libyan and Tunisian Government, 'Action Plan of the Libyan-Tunisian Tourist Co-operation Agreement', Governmental Agreement. (2006).

⁶⁴³. The Tunisian Ministry Of Tourism, 'The Libyan-Tunisian Tourism Co-operation'. Report, op cit.

⁶⁴⁴Committee, 'Minutes of the 20th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

these problems. Although the agreements signed between Tunisia and Libya on joint projects were bold and ambitious, they remained inactive. I arrived at this conclusion through a review of the contents of the official documents and the number of projects that had either been begun or were completed. No concrete actions were taken to execute many of the agreements and projects. The Minutes of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee proved to be useful in confirming my conclusion. After the 20th round of meetings of the committee, no mention is made of the 'tourist town', which occurs frequently in the previous minutes. In this case, security issues and obstacles concerning the Libyan-Tunisian border can be cited to explain the reluctance to implement the project. A lack of funding for this and other projects may also point to inconsistency between the earlier and later Minutes, or between signed agreements and reality. I think the hastiness of decision-makers led to inadequate and ill-informed planning leading to the proposal of unworkable projects.

Libyan investments in Tunisia consist of a collection of companies and hotels. The Touqrannas Company is the oldest of these companies, established in 1970 as part of a joint tourism agreement between Tunisia and Libya. About 99.98% of the company is owned by the government-run Libyan Company for Foreign Investment. It also owns and manages a number of tourist resorts and other business in the same area. The Touqrannas Company owns 100% and 99.5% of the Vessel of Dar Djerba and of the Real Estate and Hotel Group in Tabarka, respectively.⁶⁴⁵ Other assets include 5 hotels in Djerba, 1 hotel in Kebili, 1 hotel in Tozeur and the Zahra Hotel in Tunis. A group of Libyan professionals based in the headquarters in Djerba and complemented by an office in Tunis, run these business interests. Furthermore, the Libyan Company for Foreign Investment owns the Cornina Hotel Group and the Cornina Gammarth. The latter group has the second largest 5 Star hotel in Tunis.⁶⁴⁶ Overall, the impact of the Libyan tourist businesses in Tunisia has been beneficial to the two countries. Certain economic and social objectives were achieved, based on the knowledge exchange of Tunisian expertise and Libyan foreign direct investment into its neighbour's already developed tourist infrastructure. They have provided employment for several thousands of Tunisian workers in a country where tourism is the second largest sector in the economy.⁶⁴⁷ The Libyan economy was able to diversify its sources of wealth through a service-based sector, but without challenging the dominance of oil revenues.

⁶⁴⁵Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'A Report on the Libyan Investments in Tunisia'.Report. op cit.

⁶⁴⁶Affairs, 'An Abstract on the Tunisian Economy'. Op cit.

⁶⁴⁷ The Tunisian Ministry Of Tourism, ' the Libyan-Tunisian Tourism Co-operation'.Report. op cit.

Joint Policies in the Health Sector

An immense opportunity existed for knowledge exchange in the area of the provision of health services between Tunisia and Libya. Many decades of growth in this area separated these two countries. Libya's national health system has suffered from a severe deterioration in quality. Policies pursued by the Gaddafi regime failed to develop the monarchy-era system. Prior to 1969, King Idris, in Libya, adopted a policy of development. State-building, under the Senoussi monarch, was dependent on external expertise. It aimed to respond to the problem of the absence of a skilled labour force which could work in hospitals, construction projects, or in the new oil industry.⁶⁴⁸ It appears this problem continues to persist despite Gaddafi's grand projects of socialism. Socialist policies that were intended to create a more egalitarian society in Libya were unable to introduce a welfare state similar to those present in communist Cuba and the 'from the cradle to the grave' system in post-war Great Britain. Instead, socialism weakened the ability of social groups to provide alternative services, in a country under an authoritarian regime. The Gaddafi regime was the only real political actor with the financial and organisational resources to implement a nation-wide agenda. The lacks of properly qualified medical staff and an adequate infrastructure have dominated for the last few decades. A feeble educational syllabus in higher education institutions and medical schools was unable to produce the qualified doctors, nurses and other practitioners that were needed for an adequate health system. Financial and managerial corruption had also affected medical care institutions in Libya. Increasingly, Libyans lost confidence in the institutions that were intended to provide them with medical care and support.

The Tunisian health system is in direct contrast to that of its neighbour. It is one of the most advanced systems in the Arab world and Africa. High standards exist for medical staff and management. Instruction and learning in medical schools are inspired by the French curriculum, thanks to the continuation of the policy of the colonial era by Habib Bourguiba when he was President. The Tunisian regime has aimed to supply the national health sector with qualified medical professionals. Tunisia has become a hub for medical tourism from Libya and from other countries in the Maghreb, due to the positive reputation it has acquired.

Bilateral initiatives have taken place in the medical services. Tunisia and Libya have made joint decisions to pursue policies of co-operation in this vital sector. In 1993, a joint

⁶⁴⁸ Ruth Nora Cyr, *Twentieth Century Africa* (Lincoln, NE: Writers Club Press, 2001), p.297.

committee of medical experts and professionals was set up to plan and monitor the progress made in medical co-operation.⁶⁴⁹ The Committee was tasked with promoting medical training and education, policy formulation and public health awareness, between the two nations. Further, it focused on bilateral co-operation in the areas of drug manufacturing, the assignment of Tunisian medical teams to Libya, the exchange of visits and medical and pharmaceutical information, joint medical research with the Tunisian-based 'Pasteur Institute', and disease prevention and road accidents.⁶⁵⁰ Increased joint medical co-operation, during the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, can be observed. The UN sanctions on Libya restricted the overseas movement of Libyans through its national airports. A deterioration in health conditions during this period encouraged Libyan-Tunisian co-operation in the field of medical services. High quality provision of health care, closer ties with Tunisia, and its close proximity, through accessible land transport, led many Libyan patients to seek medical treatment in the nearby country. These factors made it necessary for Libya and Tunisia to increase co-operation in the area of health.⁶⁵¹

The Joint Committee on Health played a key role in formulating and implementing plans for medical co-operation. Hospitals in Tunisia and Libya were to exchange the knowledge learned from experience in the field of medical provision, and to take part in twinning agreements.⁶⁵² The development of expertise in the drugs and vaccine industry and in administration was also part of the strengthening bilateral ties. Subsequently, Tunisian medical experts trained their Libyan counterparts in this field with a special emphasis on drug control expertise.⁶⁵³ Frequent visits by medical professionals to medical institutions were to take place. Medical co-operation included various aspects, such as knowledge exchange and infrastructure reforms. Training in drug control⁶⁵⁴ and the exchange of medical expertise and specialist consultants⁶⁵⁵ were highlighted. Co-ordination of disease prevention and treatment

⁶⁴⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁵⁰Ibid.

⁶⁵¹The Libyan Ministry Of Health, 'Reasons for Libyans to Seek Medical Treatment in Tunisia', (Tripoli: 2008).

⁶⁵²Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁵³Committee, 'Minutes of the 10th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁵⁴Committee, 'Minutes of the 11th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁵⁵Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

at the shared borders of the countries was a key area of action.⁶⁵⁶ Joint Libyan-Tunisian hospitals and health centres were to be established.⁶⁵⁷ Further, there were to be plans for the creation of management mechanisms for these joint hospitals.⁶⁵⁸ Medical teams were to be assigned in both countries.⁶⁵⁹ A joint arrangement for the purchase of drugs was to be introduced, accompanied by giving priority to nationally-produced drugs on the basis of quality and competitiveness.⁶⁶⁰ Libya and Tunisia had made some joint investments in the endeavour to deepen their ties in this area. The Libyan National Medicine Company and the Tunisian Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment Centre agreed to produce drugs. In this respect, from 1974, Libya participated in establishing the 'Medicine Company', which aimed to manufacture medical equipment in Tunisia. However, the heightening of political tension between the regimes of Gaddafi and Bourguiba adversely affected the functioning of this company for about 20 years. In 2004, Libya bought all the shares in the company and relocated its headquarters to the city of Grombalia. The company markets its pharmaceutical products in Libya, Tunisia and Algeria.⁶⁶¹

Joint Policies in the Transport Sector

Road networks and transport services are essential components for the facilitation of economic integration. Agreements or co-operation were thus signed between Libya and Tunisia, seeking to improve the infrastructure connecting their two territories. The movement of goods experienced a remarkable increase in volume after Ben Ali became President, with the leaders of both countries pushing for greater integration. Cross-border trade created an interdependent relationship involving the travel of people. Sub-committees have been established since 1994 to make plans for the creation of effective transport networks. The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee focused its efforts on implementing the Joint Agreement that was concluded in meetings in Tripoli on 30th and 31st July, 1996.⁶⁶² Easing the facilitation of the flow of goods and people was a key aspect of the Agreement, with its

⁶⁵⁶The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, 'Minutes of the 12th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', (1999).

⁶⁵⁷Committee, 'Minutes of the 13th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁵⁸Committee, 'Minutes of the 11th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁶¹Committee, 'Minutes of the 18th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁶²Committee, 'Minutes of the 10th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

emphasis on the unification of the import tariffs of Tunisia and Libya. Vehicles crossing the border were required to have the correctly imposed insurance. Additionally, the agreement allowed for the transfer of transport revenues, in accordance with the accepted regulations in each of the two countries. Finally, Libya and Tunisia agreed that the terms of the transport agreement should be for 5 years and could automatically be renewed.⁶⁶³

Joint teams of specialists were founded to explore the opportunities for maritime transport between Libya and Tunisia. All available resources and mechanisms were to be deployed to develop this area of co-operation. A maritime route linking Libya's capital to Sfax was to be established.⁶⁶⁴ An agreement concerning maritime transport, made in 2001, was then implemented in 2003, which involved the training of maritime staff, maintenance of ships and the opening of a sea route for passengers and goods. Further, this route was to facilitate the traffic for trade between Libya and Tunisia, and to other Arab and African countries. Interestingly, the bilateral relations between these two Maghrebi countries expanded its scope of activity in the import and export sector of the economy. Foreign markets for Tunisian and Libyan goods could now be targeted. Maritime transport, investment and manufacturing were brought together in the joint policy between Tunisia and Libya in the African continent, and other regions. In the aforementioned agreement on maritime transport, the Libyan National Fleet Company participated in moving goods from Tunisian ports to neighbouring countries.

This agreement was considered to be a step forward in promoting economic co-operation between Libyan and Tunisian companies. It appeared at a crucial time for the company, which was charged with the task of transporting Tunisian goods. Major technical, financial and management difficulties were faced by the Libyan public sector, including the maritime services. The maritime company used outdated transport ships which were incapable of coping with the requirements of the Joint Agreement. Government subsidies were ended by the Libyan regime, thereby increasing the problems of the company after 2002. The combination of a lack of work and a large work force contributed to the making of losses. A number of vessels, such as the *Toalitla*, the *Granata* and the *Hana*, were thus sold in order to cover debts and other financial obligations. Financial and administrative corruption in the

⁶⁶³The Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Agreement for Transport People and Goods between Libya and Tunisia', in The General People's Congress (ed.), Governmental Agreement. (Surt / Libya, 1996).

⁶⁶⁴The Libyan and Tunisian Governments, 'The Bilateral Agreement for Marine Transport between Libya and Tunisia', Governmental Agreement. (Tripoli, 2000).

company further added to its inability to survive. The problems just mentioned finally led to the dissolution of the Libyan Maritime Fleet Company.⁶⁶⁵

Joint Policies in Social Welfare

Domestic affairs, in the form of policies and rules on pensions and the welfare of the labour force in Tunisia and Libya, were the focus of co-operation and integration.⁶⁶⁶ The facilitation of the movement of workers between countries and their employment in the two countries was also subject to these joint policies.⁶⁶⁷ Thousands of Tunisians had migrated to Libya to find work and they were residing there on a semi-permanent basis. The presence of a large number of nationals working abroad brought tangible benefits to Tunisia, allowing it to defuse the prospect of many social problems. Lower levels of unemployment, especially among the youth, was complemented by a reduction in the number of people living in poverty and resorting to crime. World Bank figures show the number of people living below the national poverty line in Tunisia dropped from 32.4% in 2000, to 15.5% in 2010.⁶⁶⁸ The lack of a qualified national labour force in Libya was compensated by the influx of Tunisian expertise. Libyan-Tunisian joint policies were influenced by these social and economic factors. The free movement of citizens between the Maghrebi countries was thus encouraged for the purpose of employment or private enterprise.⁶⁶⁹

Social welfare targeting the needs of disabled people was also an area of co-operation between Tunisia and Libya. Efforts were made to co-ordinate policies in both countries, supported by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. It had recommended that a wide range of activities to plan and implement projects of co-operation, such as: collecting information in a database through studies in the social welfare of the disabled, which was intended to help the formulation of appropriate policies; the use of financial and human resources for the purpose of providing equipment, qualified experts and training for future professionals in social care; regular workshops were to be planned and held to raise social

⁶⁶⁵Bureau of Financial and Administrative Transparency, 'the Libyan National Marine Company', Report. (Tripoli, 2005).

⁶⁶⁶Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁶⁷Committee, 'Minutes of the 11th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁶⁸ World Bank, "Tunisia", *Worldbank.org*, accessed 07/09/2014, <<http://data.worldbank.org/country/tunisia>>.

⁶⁶⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

awareness of disability in Tunisia and Libya; the funding of scholarships to study the social factors directly relating to disability; and the pursuing of twinning agreements between social and training organisations involved in working with disabled people, and exchange visits for the disabled and the centres looking after them.⁶⁷⁰ In Tunisia and Libya, the question of social welfare was broadly defined to include disability. The regimes in both countries created the conditions for the formation of joint committees to study and put forward policies with the objective of improving the quality of life of their citizens. However, the shared policies adopted by the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes were based on alleviating poverty or social problems through agreements formalising the ability of citizens to cross the border for employment.

Educational Joint Policies

Major differences existed between the Libyan and Tunisian educational systems whereby the establishment of genuine co-operation was often complicated. Previous socialist and populist policies in Libya had eroded the quality of education at all levels. It appears that from the 1990s extensive oil wealth did not contribute to the development of education in the areas of policy, infrastructure and curriculum.⁶⁷¹ Gaddafi's populist ideology was present in the academic syllabus. The education of young Libyans was to incorporate political indoctrination of Gaddafi's ideas and beliefs. Elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities were part of a wider system of authoritarianism which ensured the regime's official ideology was disseminated to all Libyans. This populist ideology proposed that students were to run academic institutions. Notions such as 'Student Revolutionary Management' and 'Student Movement Participation' demonstrated the involvement of politics, from the top-down, in defining Libyan society. Like-minded students were thus given the opportunity to manage institutions of study and to learn, at the expense of the university administration and staff. However, those students who did not adopt the official ideology, or who fell out of favour with the regime, were subsequently punished. A number of university students who were followers of Libyan opposition groups were executed in 1976, and academics were targeted in public executions.

⁶⁷⁰Ibid.

⁶⁷¹Ramadhan Karim, *The Libyan Educational System and Challenges of the Future* (1st edn.: Benghazi, 2012). p.27.

I will briefly mention the following aspects of Libya's educational system in order to better discuss the joint co-operation between Tunisia and Libya: its institutions of education were restricted to the vision of Gaddafi's ideology, with a marked absence of alternative intellectual orientations for the enrichment of the critical thinking of students; the national curriculum, largely based on traditional methods of teaching and learning, did not keep up with global standards; educational policies were not continuously adapted to changing national or global socio-economic needs; and the criterion for competence was not used in the recruitment of teachers and staff in academic institutions, with political affiliation being the main criterion for employment.⁶⁷² Further, Libyans were forced to suffer from low standards of teaching and learning, which did not equip them with the skills needed to have a meaningful collaboration with academics or educational systems from other nations. The authoritarian regime exercised power through rigid control of various social organisations in Libya, and it created relationships of dependency for those wishing to progress in education, both as students and teachers. Any form of dissent was not allowed in schools or on campuses.

The educational system of Tunisia is markedly more advanced if compared to its Libyan neighbour. The academic curriculum is different in both content and objectives. Contemporary Tunisia inherited the model of French education from the colonial period. Under Habib Bourguiba, with his Francophile beliefs which were discussed in Chapter 5, the new regime did not reject the cultural values of the former colonial authorities. Instead, the independence period witnessed the continued domination of French culture in government policies including education. There were also modifications to the provision of education involving greater space for the instruction of the Arabic language. Post-colonial Tunisia experienced a jump in student numbers in primary and secondary schools, from 226,736 and 32,900 for 1956-57, to 898,464 and 178,997 for 1974-75, respectively.⁶⁷³ I think Tunisia's educational system has been better able to respond to the changes in the country's national economy than Libya's due to particular factors. A French-inspired academic syllabus was implemented by Tunisian educationalists seeking to create an effective labour force with suitable skills and the knowledge needed in a developing economy. A changing system of

⁶⁷²Ibid. pp.28-29.

⁶⁷³ James Allman, *Social Mobility, Education and Development in Tunisia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), p. 65.

education allowed it to be more responsive to socio-economic changes in Tunisia.⁶⁷⁴ Political affiliations did not impede the teaching and learning process, where teachers, staff and students adhere to a formally defined sphere. The politicisation of educational institutions did not occur at the same level as was found in Libyan institutions. A huge gap between Libya and Tunisia appeared to have demonstrated the poor prospects of joint co-operation in the provision of education in these two states.

Nonetheless, there were some activities undertaken to co-operate in this sector. The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, founded in 1995, and other committees, led a few initiatives to co-ordinate the sphere of Tunisian and Libyan academic curricula. Educational specialists were urged to help improve all aspects of pre-higher education levels. Further, the promotion of universities was a priority, with a focus on the scientific research undertaken in these institutions.⁶⁷⁵ Stubborn limits to co-operation between the two countries emerged. Only a few twinning agreements were made between the universities and research centres. Agreements specifying the organising of scientific workshops, scholarly exchanges and the joint supervision of academic research were not implemented.⁶⁷⁶ Mutual recognition of higher education certificates of qualification, in accordance with a 1989 agreement,⁶⁷⁷ indicated the absence of any real integration in the education systems of Tunisia and Libya. While the educational system of Tunisia was directed at the generation of school leavers and university graduates able to join the employed labour force, largely free of ideological constraints, the Libyan system was still a mechanism of control for the authoritarian regime. Further, the politicisation of the syllabus and university campuses put severe limits on what could be taught, in accordance with the wishes of the Gaddafi regime, despite the decline of ideology in foreign policy.

Joint Electricity Networks

The demands of a modern economy are tied to the generation and supply of electricity. Economic integration between Tunisia and Libya was thus also dependent on fostering links

⁶⁷⁴al-Baji al-Mawlodi, *Development of the Tunisian Educational System: Factors and Potentials* (1st edn.: Damascus: Arab Book Printhouse, 2007) .p.78.

⁶⁷⁵Committee, 'Minutes of the 10th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁷⁶Committee, 'Minutes of the 8th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁷⁷Committee, 'Minutes of the 16th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

in their national electricity grids. The planning and implementation of a shared electricity framework was to be jointly undertaken by the Libyan Electricity Public Company and the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company, authorised by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. In May, 1997, the two companies carried out a cost-benefit analysis and a feasibility study for the proposed project, followed by an agreement to construct and finance it. Preparation of the legal, organisation and financial arrangements for the joint electricity grid took place between 1997 and 2001. Work on the project was expected to begin in July, 2001.⁶⁷⁸ A delay in the implementation of a few aspects of the necessary technical work also led to a delay in the start date, which was to be at the end of 2003.⁶⁷⁹

Strategic benefits from the project for both Libya and Tunisia motivated co-operation in this sector of the economy. Both countries were co-operating in other sectors of the economy, including shared projects in the exploitation of energy sources and Libyan investment in Tunisian tourism. Political elites in Tunis and Tripoli were firmly in charge of the process of co-operation, based on the shared goal of development. Libyan oil and gas were greatly needed in Tunisia. The joint project on the electricity grid can be perceived to have fallen in a linked process that fell between driving the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, on the one hand, and extracting natural resources for energy, on the other. Further economic and technical studies were undertaken by Libya and Tunisia in order to raise the voltage of the electrical connection between them to 400 kilovolt (KV). The findings of these studies pointed to the project's high prospects of success in a number of areas.⁶⁸⁰ Its objectives were: to cover the deficit in electricity supplies in Libya and Tunisia and to avoid power cuts in case of emergencies and technical faults in the electricity grid;⁶⁸¹ to use natural resources, namely oil and natural gas, for the efficient generation and supply of power to serve their needs and plans;⁶⁸² and to be part of a wider regional electricity grid, with the potential to incorporate other countries in the Maghreb and Egypt, Syria and Iraq.⁶⁸³ Self-sufficiency in the supply of power seems to have been a major aim of the Libyan and Tunisian regimes.

⁶⁷⁸Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹Committee, 'Minutes of the 15th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

⁶⁸⁰Ibid.

⁶⁸¹The Libyan Electricity Public Company, 'Report on the Libyan-Tunisia Joint Electricity Project', Official Report. (Tripoli, 2004).

⁶⁸²Ibid.

⁶⁸³Ibid.

Regime-led efforts in economic integration through the construction of electrical cables and power stations leading to a single electricity grid, could achieve this objective.

The proposed project of an integrated electricity grid focused on upgrading existing power stations and distribution networks. Power stations at Abu-Kammash and Al-Ruwais were upgraded and developed to the higher capacity 220 KV. Similarly, the extension of the capacity electrical cable, 220 KV, in western Libya, was completed in order to be connected to Tunisian cables. Tunisia upgraded the necessary technical work for the joint project in its territory. A power station was built in Midinina, accompanied by the development of other power stations, such as Abu-Shama, Sidi Mansour, Tataouine and Zarzis in the southern parts of the country. Electricity cables covering a distance of 370 KMs. were built in order to link the power stations with Tunisian urban and rural areas. Finally, the connection was completed between Tataouine Power Station and the Al-Ruwais Power Station in Libya.⁶⁸⁴

Integration of energy supply and electricity was to be achieved through the project focusing on the electricity grids of Tunisia and Libya. The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee paid considerable attention to the step-by-step implementation of this project. It has conducted studies and made recommendations on the bilateral co-operation so as to boost the electricity supply of both Maghrebi countries, based on a joint grid. Problems have emerged at various stages of the project. A lack of funding from the companies, namely, the Libyan Electricity Public Company and the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company, which are in charge, has delayed the integration process. A number of obstacles in the finalisation of the integrated electricity grid have emerged. Technical experts, after carrying out the first practical test on the joint project in 2003, which was followed by another test in 2008, pointed to the existence of problems. They were recorded in documents from the meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee.⁶⁸⁵ Integration efforts in the area of electricity links between Libya and Tunisia were only intended to provide a maximum of 220 KV. The two countries aimed to increase this capacity to 400 KV.. However, this target was not met by the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes. It was still subject to technical studies and it also needed more negotiations within the ELTAM group, which includes Egypt, Libya,

⁶⁸⁴Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Libyan-Tunisian Joint Technical Team, 'A Report Submitted to the Half-Year Meeting of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee', The Libyan Electric Company and Tunisian Electric Company (ed.), Official Report.(Tunis, Tunisia 2010).

Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.⁶⁸⁶ The formalising of the policy agenda for economic integration through a single electricity grid between Tunisia and Libya was partly based on studies into its impact on these countries. However, the political will of the regime of both countries is the important driving force, as shown in previous sections and chapters, for the effectiveness of the projects of bilateral co-operation. The committees formed exclusively for various aspects of Libyan-Tunisian integration were part of a process which included the companies running the proposed projects. Reluctance on the part of the regime could hinder, or stop completely, the implementation of joint projects.

Conclusion

The attempt to maintain bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya has depended on the existence of joint committees, such as the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. These committees have generated information and advised on policy. Increased co-operation in various industries and sectors has been the main motivating factor. This chapter has analysed official documents from government archives and other sources under three sections. Economic integration has been uneven, varying from industry to industry. Section One examined the bilateral agreements in the primary sector of the economy, with attention to the areas of agriculture and fishing, oil and natural gas. Knowledge exchange and long experience of agriculture in Tunisia, was needed in Libya. Agreements made thus encouraged Tunisian investments in the Libyan farming industry. The Libyan-Tunisian Company for Agricultural Equipment was founded in 1993 in order to provide the resources needed to strengthen co-operation between the Maghrebi neighbours. However, failures in the form of a lack of funding for projects such as the al-Wa'rah Pasture and the reluctance of Algeria to take part in inter-state initiatives in the Maghreb were obstacles to the implementation of agricultural-related projects. Oil and natural gas saw co-operation between Tunisia and Libya after the resolution of the continental plate dispute, an area which contained the Bouri Oil Field, renamed the 7th November Oil Field in tribute to the ousting of Bourguiba. Libya led the push for greater collaboration in oil exploitation and the gas pipelines that were to be built between Libya and Tunisia. Formalisation through committees, such as the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, and signed agreements, kept the private sector from participating in the exploitation of the lucrative area of natural resources. In Libya, the control of the oil

⁶⁸⁶Committee, 'Minutes of the 14th Session of Meetings of the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee'. op cit.

industry was essential in order to maintain the authoritarian character of the regime, which continued this control.

The second section examined the projects of co-operation in the industrial policies of Tunisia and Libya. Investment was to play a large role in stimulating bilateral relations between both countries in the attempt to benefit their economies. Studies and agreements were made to identify the areas which needed attention. Libyan efforts to attract Tunisian investment in manufacturing were motivated by the fact that local businessmen in Libya were wary of financing projects, due to the previous experience of socialism, and the public sector was victim to incompetence and corruption. However, most of the joint projects proposed were not implemented in a context that was defined by the absence of harmonisation in the following areas, e.g., legal systems, national infrastructures, labour forces and expertise. Formalisation did not bring about integration. Instead, it showed the limits of co-operation between authoritarian regimes with no popular base in two dissimilar economies, especially in Gaddafi's Libya, with its history of excluding private enterprise.

Section Three examined the tertiary sector of the economy through analysis of official documents from Tunisia and Libya. Tourism, health, transport, education and electricity formed key aspects of co-operation between the regimes of these states. The progress of integration and co-operation differed in each of these industries. While Tunisian expertise was badly needed in Libya in order to create a national tourism industry, Libyan investments were made in Tunisia's tourist businesses. The latter was a lucrative source of revenue for Libyan-backed companies working in the country, with Libyans making up the largest number of visitors. However, attempts to stimulate tourism in Libya were undermined, as noted in the previous chapter, by the intrusion of the security services. A potential threat to the political regime required the security services not only to monitor foreign visitors, but to own tourist companies to ensure the tight control of the industry.

Socialist policies in Libya had failed to create an adequate health service that was able to respond to the needs of Libyans. Instead, many went to neighbouring Tunisia, which had an established reputation for providing medical facilities and for being a centre for medical tourism in the region. Educating medical professionals was a major problem in Libya, thereby requiring Tunisian expertise in the form of knowledge exchange between the two nations and the creation of joint hospitals and medical centres. The pharmaceutical industry

also witnessed joint collaboration. This chapter, and the previous one, noted the marked increase in the volume of cross-border trade between Tunisia and Libya. An interdependent trading relationship was growing which needed a joint infrastructure able to cope and sustain it. Since 1994, committees and sub-committees had discussed and recommended an agreement, with plans for effective transport links. A formalising of the accreditation of vehicles crossing the border was introduced in the form of correctly imposed insurance. A sea route was also to be created between Tripoli and Sfax. Bilateral relations in maritime transport were to involve the training of staff, maintenance of ships and the opening of a sea route for passengers and goods, with the latter connecting Tunisia and Libya to other Arab and African countries. However, the Libyan Maritime Fleet Company was incapable of coping with the conditions of the agreement as it had outdated ships and was ruined by corruption, which eventually led its closure.

The welfare of Tunisians and Libyans was pursued in a joint policy of facilitating the movement of workers across the border of their nations. Thousands of Tunisians were working in Libya on a semi-permanent basis. The Tunisian regime was thus able to defuse many social problems, such as youth unemployment, poverty and crime. As a result, the number of those living under the national poverty line in Tunisia dropped from 32.4% in 2000, to 15.5% in 2010. In the area of caring for disabled people, Libya and Tunisia co-operated to improve their quality of life. Correct information, suitable policies, equipment, qualified experts, the training of social care professionals, were all to be achieved jointly. While Libya's populist and socialist policies had undermined the creation of an adequate labour force through its schools and universities, Tunisia's colonial era education system responded to changes in the country's socio-economic situation. Agreements to co-operate to improve the school system and higher education in both countries, through the sharing of knowledge and expertise, did not occur. However, each country's certificates of higher education were recognised.

Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations in electricity were relatively more successful than co-operation in their educational systems. Formalisation of these relations was based on the creation of a single electricity grid. The Libyan Electricity Public Company and the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company played a prominent role in planning and implementing this project, which was backed by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee. The construction of new power stations and the updating of older stations were complemented by the building of electricity cables connecting Tunisia and Libya, as a step on the path to

integration. Committees were formed to study and formulate policy. However, the authoritarian regimes of Tripoli and Tunis imposed limits on the formalising of Libyan-Tunisian ties. Potential pressure from businessmen on the need for an infrastructure supplying the energy needs for factories and other industries was effectively silenced in Libya. A monopoly on the oil industry and the distribution of its revenues by the Gaddafi regime meant that the country's political elite could ignore the demands from the private sector for a national infrastructure that was based on a shared electricity grid in the area of joint economic co-operation. The direction and pace of integration could be changed or slowed, respectively, by these regimes in a personal and, at times, random fashion.

CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS, STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Introduction

The modern history of the Maghreb does not indicate a strong trend towards integration, with political actors pursuing goals that are motivated by different interests and ideologies. I have tried in this thesis to investigate the impact of ideology in the region, with a special focus on Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations from the date of their independence until the first ten years of the 20th century. Tunisia and Libya provide an interesting case of two states that were created by different colonial powers, the French and the Italians, respectively, in a period which also saw the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Independence, for Tunisia and Libya, brought many opportunities for change and continuity. The emergence of political elites, rather than the presence of the state, appears to have had an influential role in shaping inter-state relations in the Maghreb. The ideology, or lack of ideology, adopted by political elites could thus decisively improve or damage ties between countries, such as the situation involving Tunisia and Libya. I proposed a hypothesis in this thesis in order to explore Libyan-Tunisian inter-state relations from 1969 to 2010. In Chapter 1, I stated that two key periods divide these relations. The first highlighted the dominance of ideology and the generally bitter relations between Libya and Tunisia. The rise of Muammar Gaddafi after the coup d'état against King Idris I in 1969, installed a new revolutionary regime in Tripoli and also created another threat to Bourguiba's position in Tunisia as 'President-for-life'. Twenty years of hostilities dominated the political and personal relationships between Bourguiba and Gaddafi, except for during the short-lived Islamic Arab Republic in 1974. Nonetheless, I suggested the ideology adopted by these two leaders led to bitter and difficult relations.

The second period witnessed a remarkable reversal of the mood in the relations between Libya and Tunisia after 1987. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ousted the man, Bourguiba, who had appointed him Prime Minister, and became President with a new agenda on the issue of Tunisian-Libyan ties. Various factors can help to explain why this change happened. Economic reforms in Tunisia were complemented by the international embargo on Libya, which forced it to trade with its immediate neighbours. I proposed that Gaddafi reduced the influence of ideology on his foreign policy for the purpose of defusing the hardships facing

his regime and country. Ben Ali and Gaddafi thus fostered closer ties to gain political security for their regimes through projects of economic co-operation with mutual benefits. The decline of ideology, marking a change from the period between 1969 and 1987, led to developments in economic and political relations with a number of pragmatic joint policies that were adopted to achieve what were perceived to be Tunisian and Libyan shared interests. I formulated a set of research questions with the aim of exploring the hypothesis outlined above. They were divided into two categories. The first category contains a question that asks: 'How has the decline of the role of ideology in Tunisian-Libya relations led to greater co-operation between the two countries?'. The second category asked the following questions: 'What is the context within which Libyan-Tunisian relations have developed?'; 'What were the motivations behind the inter-state policies pursued by Tunisian and Libyan statesmen?'; 'How were Libyan-Tunisian relations manifested?' and 'What are the challenges and obstacles hindering co-operation between Libya and Tunisia?' Category one focuses on the general implications of the hypothesis, and the second category was interested in exploring it in greater detail.

The combination of the hypothesis and the research questions was an important element in the grounded theory approach that is adopted in this thesis, in light of the particular aspects of the case study. Libyan-Tunisian relations are located in a historical context which has produced a set of political, economic and social factors requiring categories of analysis or interpretation that can put forward a persuasive account of these relations. Broader international and regional factors create the context for local actors to shape processes and events. Opportunities and limitations are thus created so political elites can govern with, or without, public participation. In the Maghreb, under Bourguiba, Ben Ali and Gaddafi, regimes restricted the ability of citizens to take part in the decision-making process of their countries. Authoritarian regimes were created and maintained through the nationalisation and control of national resources and companies, which was supported by the existence of security services. Formal state institutions, such as the ruling party or popular committees, concealed the real location of power. Informal ties between individuals and groups shaped the policies of Libya and Tunisia. The informal sphere was able to undermine the formal sphere through the personal nature of power within the Bourguiba, Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes. The ability of authoritarianism to marginalise or manipulate the formal institutions of the state reinforced the informal sphere of power which exists in kinship ties, or in the personal relationships between a ruler and his cronies. Vast amounts of wealth were concentrated in

the hands of a few individuals who were family members and cronies. Economic motivations were part of the calculations of these narrowly defined elites. Privatisation or socialism still served to reinforce the informal power of regimes, such as Ben Ali's or Gaddafi's. Various levels of analysis are contained in this grounded theory, consisting of the international and regional contexts which allow political actors to behave in certain ways in the formal and informal areas of power that are supplemented by material factors, such as the generation of wealth. Existing theories, such as neo-functionalism, are Eurocentric and ignore the specific characteristics of the Maghreb and other regions, which have histories entirely different from the history of Europe in the 20th century. I have examined this weakness in the first chapter and I will also revisit it in a later section in the conclusion. My contribution to the existing literature on Libyan-Tunisian relations is primarily based on the lack of attention, observed in Chapter 2, on this subject. Most of the publications focused on EU-Maghreb relations and the scope for integration between these two regions. Security based concerns about limiting immigration and other potential threats from the southern Mediterranean are key themes in the secondary sources. However, bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya appear to have been generally ignored. I have thus chosen to apply grounded theory to the exploration of Libyan-Tunisian relations between 1969 and 2010. The primary sources collected in this thesis have been used to formulate a set of categories for analysis that are outlined below in the form of reflections. These are international and regional factors, the durability of authoritarianism, the dynamics between the informal and formal spheres, and economic motivations.

Reflections and Theory

International and Regional Factors

Inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya appear to have been a product of domestic factors, on the one hand, and regional and international factors, on the other. Changes in global affairs affected the behaviour of the political elites and regimes in the Maghreb and in other regions. The Cold War, during the 20th century, was a very significant period for Arab politics, with the major economic ideologies of socialism and capitalism competing against each other. Nationalism was a strong force and was adopted in various forms by established or new regimes. In the Arab world, the division of regimes between 'radical' and 'conservative' produced bitter rivalries among the member states of the Arab League. Chapter

5 examined the effects of this split on Tunisian-Libyan ties. The presence of Jamal Abdul Nasser, later to be joined by Ahmed Ben Bella and Muammar Gaddafi, isolated Bourguiba in the politics of the Maghreb and the Arab world. Nasserism, named after Nasser, dreamed of a single Arab state uniting the colonially divided Arabs in an age of imperialism. Gaddafi, after 1969, quickly adopted this point of view, which was completely at odds with Bourguiba's conservative ideology of Tunisian nationalism and Tunisia's role in geopolitics. The idea of the 'Tunisian nation' was defined according to the specific dialect spoken by Tunisians, and the dominance of the Maliki School of Islamic jurisprudence. This view was advocated by Bourguiba and Bashir Ben Salama in their attempt to distinguish Tunisia from Maghrebi and Arab countries that were inspired by the French idea of the nationalism. Tunisia was thus a nation in her own right, without reference to other identities. Such a view generated tensions and conflicts between Bourguiba's Tunisia and pan-Arab interpretations of identity. The ideology of Gaddafi was forcefully pan-Arab and rejected the borders dividing his country from those of other Arab states. Tunisia's regime, under Bourguiba, was worried about the threat to the country's sovereignty.

However, the Tunisian President ignored his fears of being swallowed up by oil-rich and revolutionary Libya in 1974, in the ill-fated Islamic Arab Republic. The new state was to be led by Bourguiba as the President, and Gaddafi would be both Prime Minister and Defence Minister, as stipulated in the Djerba Agreement. Strong opposition to this political union came from Bourguiba's own supporters, his wife and his Prime Minister, Hedi Nouira, and Algeria's Houari Boumediene put an end to the joint agreement between Bourguiba and Gaddafi. Although Bourguiba disliked pan-Arabism, especially Nasserism, he was more inclined towards a pan-Maghrebi vision in North Africa. If Tunisia would join a project for integration, whether political or economic, then the Maghreb was the best possible candidate. The domination of Nasser in the Mashreq, and Bourguiba's dislike of military dictatorships after the attempted coup against him in 1963, ruled out union with the Arab world's eastern states. The Gafsa crisis further worsened relations between Tunisia and Libya in the context of the hostility between radical and conservative regimes in the Maghreb region. Libyan-trained Tunisian militants attempted to capture the town of Gafsa in Tunisia in order to overthrow Bourguiba. Interestingly, according to Nour -Eddin al-Alawi, a Tunisian thinker, the Algerian intelligence services had supported these militants. The inter-state relations dominating the Maghreb created an atmosphere of fear for Bourguiba, who was worried about the stability of his regime against plans to oust him that came from radical ideological

states. Force and agreements were both used by Gaddafi to implement, in practice, his ideology of pan-Arabism with the member-states of the Arab League. Actual or proposed political unions between Libya and other states, such as with Egypt and Sudan in 1970, show both Gaddafi's enthusiasm for pan-Arabism as a unitary state, and the failure of instant unification. Gaddafi's ideological vision of Arab integration failed to realise any long-term benefits and actually alienated him from his neighbours, such as Bourguiba to his west, and Nasser's successor in Egypt, Anwar al-Sadat, who once described him as '*al-walad al-majnun*' (the crazy boy).

Suspension of diplomatic ties between Libya and Tunisia from 1985-1987, in the last decade of the Cold War, preceded a radical transformation in these two countries' relations. In 1987, Ben Ali removed Bourguiba and pursued better relations with Gaddafi in Libya. The Arab world witnessed the gradual end of socialism, with economic liberalisation being introduced in Egypt, Jordan, Algeria and Tunisia. Libya's oil-based economy, together with a small population, could ignore the International Monetary Fund's strict neo-liberal reform strategy in the region. Chapter 7 observed that Libya also rejected the advice of the IMF because it did not want any external or foreign intrusion in the decision-making process of the Gaddafi regime. The Ben Ali regime introduced domestic reforms which aimed to build bridges in the Maghreb and to benefit from foreign direct investment coming from both inside and outside the region. I will elaborate further on the role of economic motivations underlying the improvement in bilateral ties between Tunisia and Libya in a later section. Additionally, Ben Ali revised the idea of Tunisian nationalism to include Islam and the Arab world. At the beginning of his reign, he advocated a greater engagement with other Muslim and Arab states in what appeared to be a complete reversal from the Bourguiba era's policies. Tunisia would no longer stand by itself, and it would work with others in the Arab world. The responses of the Gaddafi regime to this change in rhetoric and actions were mutual. Arabism's revolutionary agenda began to disappear, with ideology playing an increasingly weaker role in defining Libya's foreign policy in the Arab world and in Africa.

The end of the Cold War and the defeat of Libya's superpower ally, the USSR, sent the message that socialism and communism were no longer viable ideologies. Gaddafi's ideology combined Arabism, populism and socialism in an authoritarian mix. Previous divisions between radical and conservative regimes in the Arab world were weakening, with Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, followed by Jordan and the recognition by the PLO of the state of Israel. Egypt, no longer led by Nasser, had joined the conservative camp of Arab states with

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Under Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian troops took part in the American-led coalition against Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, while a co-ordinated Libyan-Tunisian effort was made to stop the First Gulf War. However, Libya found itself alone in the region, which was made worse by the international sanctions imposed on the country between 1992 and 2004. The global context of Libya's revolutionary politics had led to the damaging of the regime's reputation and also to punishment for acts of terrorism of which it was accused, such as the Lockerbie disaster. Libya was thus forced to look closer to home for economic and political support.

Tunisia and other African states proved to be reliable allies in getting around the UN-imposed embargo. Imported goods arrived through Tunisia, and Libyans were able to travel abroad from Tunisian airports. In the Maghreb, ideological conflicts had generated a civil war in Algeria between radical Islamists and the military regime. Populist ideologies could no longer guarantee the support of a regime from its citizens nor could it buy legitimacy. A shift from the Arab world to Africa in Libya's foreign policy was complemented by Tunisia focusing its attention on the continent. Bilateral relations between Libya and Tunisia occurred through joint investment opportunities and membership in regional organisations, such as the African Union and the Arab Maghreb Union. The motivations of Libya differed from Tunisia motivations in various ways. Libya needed strategic support during the diplomatic crisis arising from the Lockerbie disaster, and it rewarded the African states for their loyalty, since it encouraged private Libyan investors to make investments in those countries. Tunisia used its joint investment policy with Libya for the marketing of the nation's goods and services. While the Ben Ali regime aimed to open new export markets as a result of Libyan-Tunisian joint policy in Africa, Gaddafi wanted to strengthen his political, diplomatic and economic links with his African allies. Generally, Tunisian open economic policies were inspired by a neo-liberal agenda. Hamid Karoui's, Ben Ali's second Prime Minister, position on the draft budget for 1999 was based on the argument that "the protection of Tunisian products, and the national economy would be by winning competition and exportation bids, as well as by transferring competition outside Tunisia. Besides, foreigners will inevitably bring their products into Tunisia, and it is impossible to close the doors against them".⁶⁸⁷ The international context during the 1990s appears to have created the conditions for open borders, particularly for goods, not just in the Maghreb, but throughout the world.

⁶⁸⁷ Hamid Karoui, *'Speech by Tunisian Prime Minister, Hamid Karoui, at the closure of the deliberations of the Tunisian Parliament debate on the financial budget bill for 1999.*(Tunis, Tunisia 28/12/1998).

Authoritarianism: New Regimes or the Reinvention of an Old Era

Despite the republican or populist expression of the politics of Tunisia and Libya, most citizens were excluded from the decision-making processes of power. The rise of authoritarian regimes in these two countries, part of a broader trend in the Arab world, introduced a type of politics that was based on a narrow social foundation, but with a wide economic base. Post-colonial states in the Maghreb concentrated power in the hands of anti-colonial elites. The National Liberation Front (FLN), the Neo-Constitutionalist Party and the Senoussiyya monarchy claimed legitimacy through their leadership of the struggle to free their countries from colonialism. However, independence did not bring democracy. Instead, Tunisia became a one-party state led by Bourguiba and King Idris I, who exercised absolute power and was overthrown by a group of young military officers, and Libya was transformed into a republic without a democratic character. Authoritarianism, in the Arab context, is influenced by different factors that vary from country to country. History, politics, economics, society and culture have played instrumental parts in creating and sustaining political elites, which appear to be autonomous from their societies. A wide economic base under the domination of the Libyan and Tunisian regimes, from banking to natural resources to public companies, meant that they could ignore their citizens and the opposition movements. No political compromises were sought to obtain the economic co-operation of citizens, since a representative system based on tax-paying individuals was not present. This is how the personal power exercised by Bourguiba was dissimilar from the mechanisms of authority used by Gaddafi in Libya. Bourguiba's Neo-Constitutionalist Party was the ruling party in Tunisia, with no real competitors. The opposition was kept under rigid control. Other political parties in the country were banned. The Tunisian leader and his inner circle, family members and like-minded colleagues, in the Neo-Constitutionalist party, were able to determine public policies.

Similarly, Gaddafi was surrounded by his close allies and supporters. Although I will discuss the informal dimension of Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations, it is also relevant to the examination of the existence of authoritarianism in the Libyan and Tunisian contexts. Chapters 3 and 4 identified the tribal nature of King Idris I's political authority. His authority was also a product of being the head of the Senoussiyya Sufi Brotherhood, which had resisted Italian colonialism. Tribal and religious dimensions were thus present in the legitimacy claimed by Idris in order to rule over Libya. The founder of the Senoussiyya Order, Idris's grandfather, wanted to reform Islam and purify it from un-Islamic elements. However,

change was to be gradual and without revolution. Post-colonial Libya under the monarchy interpreted Islam to support the new state's conservative agenda. Gaddafi soon changed the relationship between religion and politics. Islam was going to be a revolutionary set of beliefs complementing socialism, Arabism and populism. Nonetheless, Gaddafi was forced to rely on the tribes in the same way as his royal predecessor, and he created an informal network of supporters, mainly the Gaddafi tribe, to reinforce his power. Tribal alliances continued to dominate revolutionary Libya. The self-proclaimed leader of Arabism was indebted to the tribes for power through traditional kinship ties that led to a concentration of power in the regime and the erosion of the fledgling Libyan state. This helps to explain how Gaddafi was able to drive public policies in a personal way, without the involvement of citizens or even his appointed ministers.

Popular committees were founded to look after the affairs of citizens throughout Libya and to include the voices of citizens. However, the leaders of these committees were members or supporters of the political elite and they subscribed to the ideology of the regime. Further, any alternative views were looked at with suspicion, and individuals were punished. This was also the case in higher education, in the example I cited in Chapter 8 concerning the execution of students in 1976. The official ideology of the state in Libya was to be spread throughout society. Libyan foreign policy also showed hostility to different ideas in political and economic relations. The rivalry between Bourguiba and Gaddafi was motivated by their personal disagreements on ideology and personality. Tunisia's 'President-for-Life' rejected Arabism, and Gaddafi's policies in particular, and this led to tensions between their nations. The Gafsa crisis, mentioned in the previous section, demonstrates the personal nature of bilateral relations with Gaddafi's radical pan-Arab ideology, backing an attempt to overthrow Bourguiba through Tunisian militants. Populist discourses from the state hid the reality of power in Libyan politics. Bourguiba and Gaddafi were also personally in charge of the decision-making processes of their countries' foreign policy. Decisions could be made and unmade at any moment by the leaders of Tunisia and Libya, without consultation involving close allies, as in the case of Bourguiba and Gaddafi signing the Djerba agreement on the political union of Libya and Tunisia, or the revoking of tourist visas for French nationals in Libya. Bilateral relations between these two nations were determined by the personalities and beliefs of their heads of state: although I note that Gaddafi did not give himself a formal office, such as President or Prime Minister.

The succession of Ben Ali in Tunisia also indicates the personal nature of power and how it can make radical changes to public policies in a short space of time. Political regimes in Tunis and Tripoli were the driving forces for better relations between their two states, after almost twenty years of tensions. A change in personality, along with a change in ideology in Tunisia, was accompanied by a transformation in Libya too. The regime in the country reduced the influence of Arabism and socialism in its foreign policies. Top-down and selective economic liberalisation of the Libyan economy created opportunities for Tunisian businessmen to set up factories and make investments. Similarly, the Libyan regime set up an overseas investment fund to create financial interests. Tunisia also benefited from Libya's new focus on the outside world. Joint policies were based on co-operation between Tunisia and Libya in various areas, from membership in the African Union to investment in tourism. I think the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes were able to participate in regional organisations with other regimes, in a context of loosely organised sovereign states, without losing their autonomy of action. The decision-making processes in Tunis and Tripoli was still located in the hands of unaccountable authoritarian elites. The example of Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, Muammar Gaddafi's son, shows the marriage between authoritarianism and the informal sector of power. In the first ten years of the 21st century, Saif Al-Islam presented himself as a reformer in the political and economic spheres. Despite not holding formal office, like his father, he was able to exercise influence in Libya and lead national organisations, thanks to Gaddafi's own power.⁶⁸⁸

From Informal to Formal

Formal state-building efforts in Libya and Tunisia took place against the background of colonialism. Interestingly, the forms of resistance against the French in Tunisia and the Italians in Libya were expressed through informal social structures. In Chapter 3, I observed that anti-colonial activities rejected the colonially-imposed borders separating the two territories, with fighters such as Khalifah Ben Asker, in Libya, and Mohammad Daghbaji, in Tunisia, crossing these borders. The colonial subjects of the French and Italians were very uncomfortable with the rigid boundaries which they perceived to have little or no legitimacy. An informal dimension to the modern Maghreb existed before independence. The tribal and social systems of the region combined the informal and formal spheres of power and authority. Colonial states were imposed from above, and they were based upon coercion,

⁶⁸⁸ Larbi Sadiki, "Like Father, Like Son: Dynastic Republicanism in the Middle East," Policy Outlook no. 52 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), p. 7-9.

rather than the mass participation of their inhabitants. Independence brought high expectations for the formalisation of the rights and activities of Tunisians and Libyans. Libya and Tunisia were ruled by monarchs. However, Bourguiba had abolished the monarchy, and he became President instead. The head of the Senoussiyya brotherhood was appointed King of Libya, enjoying wide powers. The institutions of the modern state had not yet acquired legitimacy, to the extent that King Idris I had to rely on his religious and tribal authority to rule. Informal social networks underpinned the emerging Libyan nation-state. Similarly, Gaddafi's acquisition and maintenance of political power, despite the modern rhetoric of populism he depended on tribal support. Family members and cronies formed the political elite of Libya and Tunisia. However, the Tunisian elite was also made up of like-minded Francophile politicians, with the Youssefists, noted in chapters 3 and 5, excluded from politics in the independence period.

The state, ruling party or popular committees, was not the exclusive sources of political activity. As the authoritarian regimes of Libya and Tunisia became more and more entrenched, the informal sphere replaced formal organisations. Top-down control under a one-party state in Tunisia had concentrated power within political elite that was headed by Bourguiba, accompanied by his supporters. Formal policies were shaped by informal relationships involving a small group of individuals. The example of Ahmed Ben Saleh demonstrates the personal and informal nature of politics. Ben Saleh, a trade unionist within the ruling party, urged Bourguiba to adopt socialist policies to achieve a rapid modernisation of Tunisia in order to generate jobs for the country's large number of individuals of working age: exactly half of the population in 1970. However, the failure of these policies led to Ben Saleh falling foul of Bourguiba, being punished by the judiciary and, subsequently, imprisoned.

Populism in Libya had effectively eroded the state's ability to govern. Interestingly, Gaddafi attempted to raise himself above formal politics, similarly to Idris I, as the strongest leader among the Libyan tribes. It is in this context that he held the titles of 'Guide of the Revolution' or 'Brother-Leader', as I mentioned in Chapter 8. However, the appearance of freedom from the state or politics was undermined by the fact Gaddafi and his regime were in complete control of the oil industry. As with Idris I, a distance was put between Gaddafi and the everyday running of the country. Popular committees were intended to bring together the informal, ordinary citizens, and the formal, executive decision-making powers, in the empowerment of the masses. Nonetheless, real executive power was exercised by Gaddafi, in

a personal fashion which reduced the effectiveness of the formal sphere. Increasingly, healthcare and education fell victim to the corruption and incompetence of the public sector. Chapter 8 discussed the deterioration of both these areas of Libyan life during Gaddafi's reign. Socialism failed to realise the promises of equality and social justice. Instead, inequalities widened between the political elite, which became enclosed in an informal universe of nepotism and surveillance, and the rest of society. Inter-state relations could benefit or suffer from the weakness of the formal institutions of the state. Public policies were thus shaped by personal decisions, rather than by a collective and accountable process. This explains how Bourguiba and Gaddafi could, as I observed earlier; quickly agree to a political union in 1974, only to dissolve it a few days later.

Bilateral ties between Tunisia and Libya, under Ben Ali and Gaddafi, underwent a sudden improvement. Former hostilities were abandoned, with a new emphasis on co-operation in the Maghreb. The Libyan-Tunisian border, which dated from the colonial period, became subject to the informal traffic of goods and people. No policing of the border, at least on the Libyan side, was enforced in the early years of Gaddafi-Ben Ali relations. In a symbolic act, Gaddafi drove a tractor and destroyed a border crossing in 1988, to send the message that a new era had been born after the border had been closed for two years between 1985 and 1987. The informal sphere was dominated by the rapid rise in smuggling and the black market economy. Libyan border towns now contained 'the Tunisian Souk', where goods from Tunisia were brought into Libya without any regulations or the imposition of customs duty taxes. Although Gaddafi's dream of integration with an Arab neighbour could be understood to have become a limited reality in the free flow of people and goods, attempts soon followed to formalise this cross-border activity. Joint committees were founded only for this purpose, backed by the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes. The formalising of bilateral ties in the form of committees that were made up of both Tunisians and Libyans was underpinned by the ultimate authority of the regimes. The preamble to documents produced by the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee begins:

Under the guidance of the two countries' leaders, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the leader of the Al-Fateh Revolution, and his brother, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of Tunisia.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁹ This preamble appeared in most of the Minutes of the Libyan-Tunisian Joint Committee's meetings. This means that the decisions of these committees are subject to the instructions of the political leadership, which,

Previous attempts to institutionalise the ideologies of the regimes in Tunisia and Libya were replaced by the formalisation of economic co-operation. Neo-liberal economics, after the USSR's collapse, in the last decade of the 20th century, had weakened the ideologies of pan-Arabism and socialism. New emphasis was placed on the ideas of economic growth, foreign direct investment and the private sector. The National Treatment Principle, rather than Arab unity, defined the new relationship between Tunisia and Libya through the activities of formal organisations. Goods from both these countries were to be regarded as equal and exempt from customs duties.

The Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber was established and it participated in regulating bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya through recommendations and the implementation of agreements. Extensive co-ordination of commercial activities by the Chamber and the Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, sought to create opportunities for both publicly-owned and private companies. Rules and mechanisms were imposed, such as the issuing of certificates of conformity for goods produced in Tunisia and Libya, in order to harmonise the cross-border trade. Further, the Protocol on the Rules of Origin stipulated that 40% of a product must have local elements of the country in order to be considered a 'national' good, and thus escape customs taxes. Reports and recommendations by the /high Committee were also part of the process of determining the framework of behaviour and the activity of other social actors: especially a previously illegal private sector in Libya. Signed agreements aimed to formalise and regulate the inter-state economic exchange after the period of informal trade that had led to the growth of the black market. Control of trade between Tunisia and Libya was carried out through bilateral efforts and in an authoritarian context. The formal sphere could be used to strengthen political elites who had previously relied on informal kinship networks and the security services in order to stay in power.

Economic Motivations

While the first period mentioned in the hypothesis, between 1969 and 1987, was dominated by bilateral relations that were influenced by ideology, the second period, from 1987 until 2010, was marked by economic concerns. In Chapter 8, I divided my discussion according to the key areas of the economy, beginning with the primary sector, followed by the secondary sector, and, finally, ending my analysis on the tertiary sector. These three sectors were

after 1987, became more willing to achieve co-operation that would lead to integration in the medium or long term.

interdependent to a large degree, and the strengths of industries within and across them differed. There were also differences between Tunisia and Libya in the level of development of the sectors and industries in their economies. Organisations, such as the Tunisian-Libyan Economic Chamber, participated in the co-ordination of economic interests between their Libyan and Tunisian counterparts, including companies and businessmen. Saeeda Hashisha pointed out, in an interview, that interdependence between Tunisia and Libya could only become a reality if the regimes in power actively produced the context for it. I mentioned above that the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s was accompanied by the ideological bankruptcy of socialism. Arab states abandoned many of the policies that were originally aimed at redistributing wealth through the nationalisation of the private sector.

Among Arabs, post-colonial politics was strongly influenced by socialist ideals in the mid-20th century. In the first section, I examined the divide between radical and conservative regimes, which also demonstrated the division between socialist and pro-capitalist economies in the Arab world. Tunisia and Libya were members of both camps for some time after independence. King Idris I had moved Libya onto a path of capitalist development, alongside an emerging welfare system. Tunisia experienced state-led development in partnership with the private sector, the traditional bourgeoisie, under the Bourguiba regime. Industrialisation was pursued, at first without the nationalisation of industry or land, as had occurred in Libya or further east in Egypt under the Nasserist regime. The largely unsuccessful socialist policies implemented during the 1960s were replaced by liberal policies. The Bourguiba regime wanted to quickly modernise through either a liberal or a socialist agenda. Pragmatic concerns guided the Tunisian leadership in the economy. A light industrial sector, mainly manufacturing goods, was created alongside the growth of tourism in the country. Exports to overseas markets and attracting foreign visitors made Tunisia dependent on international capital flows needed to stimulate economic growth and generate employment for an increasingly youthful population. These two factors would encourage Tunisia, after the ousting of Bourguiba, to foster better relations with the Libyan regime in order to benefit from its oil revenues. During Ben Ali's rule, a neo-liberal policy was implemented in Tunisia, indicating the priority of economic motivations in the calculations of his regime. He is reported to have said that:

The globalisation which we have chosen to engage in with confidence and determination puts major challenges before us. We have to rise to them because they provide us with opportunities which we have to seize.⁶⁹⁰

Globalisation was understood in economic terms, with the political implications of an open society rejected by Ben Ali. Foreign direct investment was thus a crucial dimension to generate a national income, to generate jobs for Tunisians and to secure the stability of the regime of Ben Ali. Tourism in Tunisia was subject to heavy Libyan investment. It is important to note that tourism generated the second largest number of jobs in the Tunisian economy. Further, tourists from Libya became the highest number of visitors from a foreign country. The Gaddafi regime's efforts to diversify its sources of income can be seen in the government-run Libyan Company for Foreign Investment's ownership of the Touqrannas Company. Resorts and hotels were run by this company, which generated jobs for Tunisians. Mutual investment opportunities in various sectors of the economy appear to have changed the Gaddafi regime's deep dislike for private enterprise from the mid-1970s until the late 1980s. In Libya, socialism had, as I noted earlier, removed the private sector from the economy. The Gaddafi regime had no competitors in society and managed to tighten its control on all economic sectors. Oil was the key prize which enabled it to depend less and less on the state. Further, the pressure to create a national infrastructure that was partly funded by the regime and driven by private enterprise was absent. Gaddafi's *The Green Book* had, as cited in Chapter 4, described capitalism in negative terms. Economic exploitation of the masses was to be confronted through banning private capital. The phrase 'Partners not Workers' was repeated in an appeal to the egalitarian nature of the socialist and populist ideology of the Libyan regime. However, this was an attempt to eliminate autonomous sources of activity in Libya which could pose a political threat to Gaddafi's authoritarian political and ideological position, as I argued further in Chapter 4.

Libya's public sector ran the economy with disastrous effects for the country's society. Manufacturing was weak and other areas of industry, except oil-related products, did not receive the attention of the regime's development plans, or they failed to develop. A lack of competence that was made worse by corruption had eroded Libya's economy. Thus many Libyans turned to neighbouring countries for goods, and even for healthcare. Ben Ali's Tunisia was an obvious choice for many, with the Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations

⁶⁹⁰Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, 'Speech by Tunisian President at the Tenth Symposium of the Constitutional Democratic Rally. *Tunisian Al-Sabah Newspaper*. 15/11/1998. P. 2.

attempting to facilitate the movement of people and goods. The international embargo imposed on Libya was also a key factor which led many Libyans to go to Tunisia as a link to the outside world. As a result, Libya moved away from socialism and was motivated by an agenda of economic reform. Misbah Fakroun observed that:

The effect of the ideological factor is no longer as strong as it was before the mid-1990s. Very often, we took decisions that we could not have taken because they conflicted with some of the principles of the ideology that applied in Libya. For instance, Libya gave licenses to Tunisian business agencies, although they were inconsistent with Libyan socialist thoughts, which considered these activities to be exploitative and not to establish social justice.⁶⁹¹

The liberalisation of the economy was selective and was managed from the top-down. While ideology, after 1987, appears to have declined in Gaddafi's Libya, the authoritarian dominating the country remained unchanged. Arabism and socialism were ignored, and there was an increased emphasis on reviving private enterprise under restricted conditions. The oil industry was still held by the regime and was not affected by the privatisation of foreign investment in other areas of Libya's economy. Mahmoud al-Fatissi stated, in an interview I conducted with him, cited in Chapter 6, that the continued domination of oil by Gaddafi was motivated by his ideas. I would argue instead that this area of the economy was primary and was the largest source of national income which, if relinquished, would lead to the demise of the authoritarian system which had been in place since 1969.

Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations were beginning to be based on economic growth, with important consequences. The Tunisian leadership, led by Ben Ali, was less interested in fighting the battles of Bourguiba and was keen on attracting foreign direct investment. Libya's petrodollars were thus a very important source of external funding for a Tunisian economy dependent on international capital. Interestingly, Libyan incentives to open up the economy were not based on Tunisia's links to global capitalism, which allowed it ignore the advice of international organisations such as the IMF, which might have led to an intrusion into Gaddafi's control of Libyan politics. Nonetheless, Tunisian investment was welcomed in Libya in the areas of manufacturing and agriculture, as I pointed out in Chapter 8, with Tunisian experience being utilised. Further, bilateral relations took place in Africa, led by

⁶⁹¹Author's interview with Misbah Fakroun, a former member of The Libyan-Tunisian High Executive Committee, and the Head of the Arab Co-operation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Libya. (Tripoli, 2013).

Libya's growing influence in the continent. Investment by Tunisia and Libya, on a joint basis, occurred through the United Libyan-Tunisian Corporation. Although Ben Ali saw greater co-operation with Libya as a means to secure his rule and achieve economic growth, Gaddafi wanted to get around the sanctions against his regime. Political interests and the weakening of ideology motivated both regimes to work together. The authoritarian nature of power in Tunisia and Libya could still be an obstacle in their economic ties. In Chapters 6 and 8, I mentioned the involvement of the intelligence services in the economy, through the ownership of tourist companies. Further, foreign visitors were subject to surveillance in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. Collaboration on joint projects between Tunisia and Libya failed to change the attitude of the Libyan regime in this area. The unpredictability of the Libyan regime in bilateral relations also negatively impacted on the integration of the Libyan-Tunisian tourist industry. French tourists, forming a large number of tourists visiting Tunisia, had their visas for Libya revoked, under an agreement allowing them entrance to both Maghrebi countries. Libya's national tourism thus suffered a blow alongside the previous co-ordination of the Libyan and Tunisian regime on an issue that remained politically sensitive for Tripoli.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

The research I have carried out that is contained in this thesis aimed to answer and explore the hypothesis outlined above through the collection and analysis of primary sources. I used a grounded theory approach to generate the categories of analysis which have been discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. My choice of grounded theory, complemented by discourse analysis, was based on the specific historical context that gave rise to Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations. Other theories, such as neo-functionalism, were unsuitable due to their Eurocentric ideas about integration among nation-states and the existence of supra-national institutions, such as the European Union.

Europe's historical experience is unique to the continent, after experiencing two world wars, the Cold War and the formation of the EU in 1957. Further, the colonial powers dominating the Arab World and the Maghreb were located in Europe. Different cultural, economic, political and social factors distinguish Europe from the Maghreb. In North Africa, the nation-state is still in a process of maturing. I conducted this research with the awareness that a

theory that was able to explain the specific aspects of Libyan-Tunisian bilateral relations from 1969 to 2010 needed to be formulated. Integration in the Maghreb did not follow a 'European model' nor did it show a potential for an Arab or a pan-Maghrebi unitary state. Instead, I wanted to identify the key aspects of the relations through the influence of ideology and its subsequent decline. Discourse analysis was applied to the primary sources, which were collected from interviews and official documents. I focused my analysis on the language contained in the interview answers and documents. Key words and phrases were identified, as well as their repetition. Further, terms relating to these words and phrases were subject to examination. I aimed to generate a set of categories that was based on the content of the primary sources. In the following subsections, I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of my research in an attempt to examine Libyan-Tunisian relations with reference to the primary sources that I collected.

Data Collection

The first stage of collecting information for my thesis required that I formulate a number of questions reflecting the hypothesis and research questions. At the same time, I identified possible interviewees who would agree to take part in interviews. All the participants were from either Libya or Tunisia. I was aware of the need to formulate questions which could both identify the key themes of interest in this thesis and give interviewees the freedom to answer according to their experiences, memories and opinions. Semi-structured interviews were used throughout this research. However, a major weakness emerging from this type of interview questioning is the constraining of the interviewee, who may feel pressurised to answer questions in a particular way. A balance between prepared questions and open-ended answers was very important to achieve in an attempt to develop the preliminary hypothesis.⁶⁹² The process of formulating the hypothesis and the research questions acted as reference points for me as I reformulated their focus in the light of the research gathered from primary and secondary sources. Both the hypothesis and the research questions, in the early stage of research, highlighted the potential themes to be asked in interviews. I wanted to give my interviewees the space to identify and explore various aspects of Libyan-Tunisian relations without imposing on them a fixed set of agendas. Interviewees were able to make links between past events and changes in the present.

⁶⁹² Stephen L. Schensul et al, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999), p. 149-150.

Additionally, the collection of information from the various participants helped the process of identifying shared assumptions and opinions. Structured interviews would not have allowed me to obtain data from which to generate a theory of analysis and interpretation based on grounded theory. Despite the apparent flexibility in the use of unstructured interviews, the differences among the interviews were unable to allow a systematic comparison of the answers collected, which was needed in my thesis.⁶⁹³ Instability in the Maghreb during the Arab Spring made the interviewing of participants difficult. The political and security conditions delayed the conducting of interviews as I contacted potential interviewees. Some refused to talk about the Gaddafi-Ben Ali era. In many cases, initial agreements to be interviewed were withdrawn. Collection of first-hand accounts of Libyan-Tunisian relations from 1969 until 2010 also required the identifying and obtaining of official documents from state or government archives. Politically sensitive information was contained in these documents in a context that was not favourable to the free activity of carrying out research. I thus used personal contacts to obtain them, and I also requested official papers from individuals who were connected to the particular research areas. The interview questions and answers and the official documents that I analysed were mostly in Arabic. As this thesis has been written in English, I was required to undertake translations from Arabic to English, using various Arabic-English dictionaries. This process required being able to translate key words and phrases from one language to another without losing the original meaning. However, I am very aware of the specific cultural context of languages such as Arabic and English, and I tried to avoid errors in the process of translation. Secondary sources on Tunisia and the Arab world, written in in English, were very helpful finding suitable corresponding words with the same or similar meanings.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Application of discourse analysis to the above mentioned sources was based on the importance of language in revealing the motivations for, and aspects of, bilateral relations between Tunisia and Libya from 1969 to 2010. The existence of a repetitive pattern of key words and phrases in the primary sources allowed me to identify a set of themes that interviewees and the authors of official government documents considered essential. Inconsistency in the information collected from the primary sources may appear to be a weakness. Differences of opinion are to be expected on such a polarised subject as Libyan-

⁶⁹³ C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (New Delhi: New Age International, 2004), p. 98.

Tunisian relations. The personalities of Gaddafi and Bourguiba provoke a variety of reactions from supporters and foes alike. However, I was able to obtain a level of consistency through the frequent comparison of information gathered from interviews and documents. Secondary sources also played a key part in supplying a context to primary sources. Grounded theory complemented the set of themes identified from the primary sources, which later led to the formulation of a theory suitable to the case study under investigation. I examined in detail the various aspects of the theory which were generated from the interpretation of primary sources throughout my research. These aspects were divided according to the following headings: international and regional factors, durability of authoritarianism, the dynamics between the informal and formal spheres, and economic motivations.

As a result of the limited focus of the research I conducted on Libyan-Tunisian relations between 1969 and 2010, I had to be selective of the areas I investigated. My research was restricted to two countries during a specific period, on a particular area with political, economic and social implications. My findings and the theory generated from applying discourse analysis will thus have a limited applicability to other case studies. The level of generalisation has been restricted, as I have focused on a case study concerning inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya. At the same time, I have also identified broader trends within these relations that may lead to de-emphasising exceptions in the analysis and findings that are present in this thesis. However, I have sought to frequently cite evidence to support arguments and positions. The accumulation of quotations and citations in this thesis was aimed at strengthening the analysis of Libyan-Tunisian ties.

I identified Gaddafi's rise to power after 1969 as the key period which began a tension-filled relationship between Libya and Tunisia. Previously, King Idris I had maintained cordial ties with Bourguiba, and had shared a conservative outlook on the geopolitics of the Middle East. However, the establishment of socialism and Arabism as the ideologies of the Libyan regime, and the Tunisian nationalism espoused by the Bourguiba regime, contributed to a negative political environment in the Maghreb. My research finished its examination of Libyan-Tunisian ties from 1987 to 2010. Improved relations in this period were preceded by a decline in ideology, revolutionary Arabism and Tunisian nationalism, in the late 1980s. I deliberately chose not to continue my study after 2010, due to the outbreak of the Arab Spring and the fall of Ben Ali. Similar protests broke out in Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen and Libya. Other authoritarian heads of state were brought down, such as Hosni Mubarak, Ali Abdullah Saleh and Gaddafi. To include the period after 2010 would have introduced an entirely new

dimension to my thesis, and perhaps a new hypothesis and set of research questions. Further, the Arab Spring has created a new context, which has not yet settled down, and the implications of the end of the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regimes is far from clear.

Future Research

In-depth Examination of Relations between Bourguiba and Gaddafi

In this thesis, I conducted research into inter-state relations between Tunisia and Libya in the period of independence from 1969 to 2010. I will now propose future areas of research which can elaborate further on my analysis and the reflections contained here. Although I examined Bourguiba and Gaddafi as part of the first part of my hypothesis: that the impact of ideology on their bilateral ties was largely negative, there is plenty of ground to cover concerning the personal relations of these two individuals. The psychology, background, education and beliefs of both Bourguiba and Gaddafi can be analysed in order to better understand what drove their hostile attitude towards each other. Unofficial papers, eyewitness accounts and autobiographies can be used to draw a picture of the personal relations between Bourguiba and Gaddafi in a deeply ideological context. Bourguiba's years in France and his participation in the Tunisian anti-colonial movement, leading to imprisonment, had a strong impact on him. The humble tribal background of Gaddafi and his years in the military preceded his revolutionary phase of pan-Arabism, which lasted almost 20 years. Personal histories of these two leaders, similar to those of other heads of state, can provide clues to understanding the bilateral relations of their countries during the Cold War.

Libyan-Egyptian Bilateral Relations in the Post-colonial Period

The analysis of Libyan-Tunisian ties deliberately ignored the presence of Egypt in North Africa. Although Egypt is not considered to be part of the Maghreb, it has exerted a lot of influence on Libya and other countries. Jamal Abdul Nasser was a hero to many Arabs, and this level of support threatened 'conservative' regimes in the Arab world. However, the geopolitics of the region was transformed after his death. Anwar al-Sadat, who succeeded Nasser, moved Egypt from the radical camp when he signed a peace treaty with Israel and his country was subsequently excluded from the Arab League. The assassination of al-Sadat was a major turning point in the Middle East. The new President, Hosni Mubarak, decisively pushed Egypt to the conservative camp. Libya's regime, under Gaddafi, had lost a strategic

ally in al-Sadat, and this was even truer in Mubarak's reign. In this context, I would propose future study into the Libyan-Egyptian bilateral relations, which could point to the opposite findings to those in this thesis. Although a decline in the role of ideology in Libyan-Tunisian relations did lead to better relations, Gaddafi's Libya and Nasser's Egypt enjoyed excellent relations, thanks to a shared ideology. Crises plagued the relations between Libya and Egypt during the reigns of al-Sadat and Mubarak, with their shared border witnessing the unpredictable pattern of conflict and co-operation.

Tunisian Relations with other Arab States

Foreign policy relations between Tunisia and other Arab states would consist of an exploration of the broader context of the Arab world during the 20th century. Although the leaderships of Bourguiba and Ben Ali turned to Europe and the USA for military and economic partnership, the relations they had with their Arab neighbours were very important. The location of Tunisia between oil-rich Libya and FLN-controlled Algeria, showed how vulnerable it could be, surrounded as it was by radical regimes. However, the conservative regimes in the Arab Gulf provided some support. Bourguiba had backed the formation of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) as part of his links to Saudi Arabia. The Tunisian President's anti-monarchy sentiments did not stop him from having friendly relations with the monarchies of the Gulf. Instead, these states provided support against the revolutionary ideology dominating Egypt, Libya and Algeria during the Cold War era. I think further investigation into Tunisian-Gulf relations would show the existence of cordial ties without the negative impact of ideology.

Gaddafi's Africa Policy: The 'King of Kings'

In the post-Cold War period, the Libyan regime, led by Gaddafi, shifted its focus or regional co-operation from the Arab world to Africa. I have identified the shift to the African continent in the context of Libyan-Tunisian relations in this thesis, but I have not explored in detail the underlying motivations that drove Gaddafi's increased presence in the continent. Interestingly, Gaddafi was apparently awarded the title of 'King of Kings' of Africa, in addition to his other domestic titles. Did pan-Africanism replace pan-Arabism as the ideology of the Libyan regime? What made Africa a more attractive prospect for integration and co-operation? Why did the Libyan regime pursue closer relations with states such as Zimbabwe? These three questions will need to be answered in any future research on Gaddafi's policies on Africa in a changing world. I have only slightly examined the overlapping issues that

combine the questions proposed here, due to limited space in my thesis. Future scholarship should identify the motivations for the dramatic change in the foreign policy of Libya after the end of the Cold War, and the consequences of such a change on African states and societies.

Study of Tunisia's Foreign Policy in Africa

Although my research looks into the bilateral ties between Tunisia and Libya, I did not fully engage with Tunisian foreign policy in Africa. Similarly to the previous proposed area of research, the limited focus of this thesis was only on relations between two states which were African, Arab and Maghrebi. Africa represented a lucrative export market for Tunisia, but the country's foreign policy was made up of a complex process. The line between politics and economics was not strictly observed. Ben Ali's authoritarian regime, from 1987 to 2011, had financial interests in various sectors of the economy. Tunisian exports were considered to be a key part of the political interests of the regime, whereby membership in the African Union, examined above and in a previous chapter, was underpinned by a neo-liberal agenda. African states have become increasingly prominent on the world stage and the Nigerian economy overtook South Africa in 2014 to become the largest economy in Africa. A potential area of further study is the exploration of how Ben Ali's foreign and economic policies were connected in the interaction with the dynamic economies of Africa.

The Arab Spring and the New Dynamics in Libyan-Tunisian Relations

This study on Libyan-Tunisian relations began before the outbreak of the Arab Spring in late 2010 and early 2011, which saw revolutions in these two countries. Mohammad Bouazizi's act in setting himself on fire in a desperate act of frustration and protest, culminated in the end of Ben Ali's regime following mass protests. The fate of Gaddafi was similar, if not more violent, after the protests in Libya were transformed into an armed rebellion seeking to topple him. At the present time, both the Ben Ali and Gaddafi regime no longer exist. The findings and reflections I have noted in this thesis can lay down the foundations for research into the Arab Spring. A post-authoritarian Maghreb can benefit from scholarship on the previous era of top-down politics that were restricted to unaccountable political elites. I have shed light on the processes of formalisation and how the lack of political will was an obstacle to a predictable state of relations between Tunisia and Libya during the period under examination. Further research could focus on the future direction of inter-state relations between a democratising Tunisia and a Libya that is currently experiencing a civil war. Has the Arab

Spring created an opportunity for regimes, struggling to democratise, to work together on the project of integration? Will the new governments in Libya and Tunisia take advantage of this opportunity? What consequences emerge from the demise of authoritarianism in Tunisia and Libya on their bilateral relations? The questions asked in this subsection require exploration through the examination of primary sources and interviews with the new political actors, who were previously marginalised.

Policy Recommendations of the Study

I will now make two recommendations for policy-making in the area of Tunisia-Libyan interstate relations. The study generated a theory of analysis which identified international and regional factors, the strength of authoritarianism, the interaction between informal and formal spheres, and economic objectives. The first recommendation proposes that Libyan and Tunisian decision-makers in a post-authoritarian environment must recognise the notion of a democratic mandate obtained through elections. Popular participation could then be included in the decision-making process without excluding key actors, such as businessmen, merchants, workers and others. A less ideological atmosphere would be reflected in the public policies of the governments in Tunis and Tripoli. I propose that concrete issues, such as the provision of healthcare and the quality of education, dominate the demands of people in Tunisia and Libya. I thus argue further that the need to include individuals who were previously marginalised by the authoritarian systems led by Bourguiba, followed by Ben Ali, and Gaddafi, would mark a reversal of relations. This reversal would be more significant than the period between 1987 and 2010 in terms of the empowerment of the people who actually travel and trade across the Libyan-Tunisian border. Maintaining the direction towards freedoms in politics and media will prove to be essential if economic integration is to be realised.

The second recommendation argues that the decline of ideology from 1987 onwards, and the more recent disappearance of dictatorships, have created a context suitable for the implementation of previously agreed projects of economic integration. A free trade zone, a highway connecting Tunisia and Libya, and the creation of a single electricity grid and bilateral investment deals involving the private sector, are key areas of potential activity. Economic interdependence can be achieved through political will. Building up the capacity of

state institutions, a strong challenge in Libya, and using these institutions to formalise bilateral ties, can contribute to long-term co-operation. High levels of unemployment and social issues can be tackled jointly through investment policies in all three sectors of the economy: primary, secondary and tertiary, targeting problem areas. While co-operation in tourism presents a short-term solution to the generation of jobs, joint co=ordination in education, through teacher and educationalist exchange programmes, can improve the competitiveness of the Libyan and Tunisian economies. A dynamic and adaptable labour force would then be able to compete with other developing or developed countries in the Arab world and in other regions.

GLOSSARY

The General People's Congress	Libyan Parliament
The General People's Committee	Libyan Cabinet
The General People's Committee for Foreign Relations and international Cooperatio	Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The General People's Committee of Finance	Libyan Ministry of Finance
General Secretary of the General People's Committee	Libyan Prime Minister
The General Libyan People's Committee of Tourism	Libyan Ministry of Tourism
The General Libyan People's Committee of Economy	Libyan Ministry of Economy
The General Libyan People's Committee of Health	Libyan Ministry Of Health
The General People's Committee for Control and Follow-up	It was a watchdog department in the Libyan Parliament established to prevent corruption, and to set, monitor, and enforce standards of financial transparency in executive branches.
Senoussiyya	Senoussiyya Sufi brotherhood was present throughout the Sahara desert. It was founded by a returning pilgrim, from Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz, who preached the return to a simple and uncorrupted form of Islam. Most of the members of the Senoussiyya were recruited from the tribesmen of Libyan Desert. The Senoussiyya opposed Italian colonialism and were able to start a process of state-building in Libya where none had existed.
Youssefism	Youssefism acquired its name from the eponymous Youssef Ben Selah, who was a Tunisian Leader, WHICH included the currents of thinking, political parties, unionist organisations, patriotic and other revolutionary adherents, who believed in armed struggle as the right way to liberate the land from

French Colonialism.

al-Qardabiyah	It is one of the Battles between the Libyans and Italians during the colonial period in which Italians defeated.
The Mashreq	It is the East region of the Arab World composes Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. It refers to the direction of the place of Sunrise.
The Maghreb	It is the West region of the Arab World composes Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.
Shi'ite imam	It refers to a majority sect of Shi'ite Muslims whose traditionally believe in the Twelve Imams who are spiritual and political successor of the Islamic prophet Mohammed (Peace upon him).
Maliki school	It is one of the four Islamic law schools (Madhhab Fiqhi) within Sunni Islam.
Tunisian Souk	A black market that had flourished in the hands of cross-border smugglers which emerged in the border cities of Libya.
Fellagha	It refers to a group of fighters using a special tactic of military offensive which had used by Libyan and Tunisian fighters against the colonial Authorities.
Shari'ah courts	It refers to courts that apply the Islamic law in Judiciary.

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